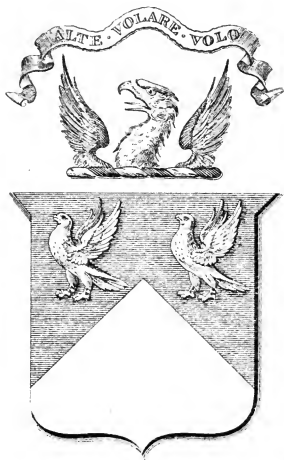


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Auto

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

OF AN

INDIAN ARMY SURGEON;

OR,

LEAVES TURNED DOWN

FROM A JOURNAL.

THE
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HENRY MORSE STEPHENS

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LEAVES TURNED DOWN,

AND

FLY SHEETS FROM AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY.

CHAPTER I.

WHISPERS FROM THE STUDY.

I WRITE this history after many a consultation with my pillow. It has not always been a downy cushion, nor in truth has it been an unerring guide. The foot-prints of life never pass on an unimpressed field; they are very many, and although for the most part evanescent, retaining their form only according to the soil on which they fall, yet the least—the very least of them—bear some import, could we but analyze them.

I had scarcely thought of recording the checquered years of a student's probation, they are so little in advance of boyhood. Manhood is but a short stage further on; and when I look back to days full of bustling toil, and nights of eye-straining that left the monotonous type only to dip into an uncertain professional future, I see in the student's career a fair illustration of the "bivouac of life;" an important link in the chain of

LEAVES TURNED DOWN.

years that all youth not born to fortunes must keep ever forging.

That is one of the greatest epochs, when the boy-student, emancipated from the classics, enters upon those professional studies by which it has been ordered that he must gain his bread. Five important years are before him, and then comes another era; he is qualified in a legal sense; is he always so in the common acceptation of the term? Through these five years he may float on the buoyancy common to his age, and after all break down; and when the usual formalities have ended an academical session, and a hundred such are sent abroad to struggle for the smiles of the public, how many of that hundred gain these smiles? I doubt but few.

Let the medical aspirant illustrate this. Of his class all are not similarly placed. The same bench may hold him who pretends to a fashionable qualification, and the ardent inquirer after knowledge, who, when his daily work is done, returns somewhat stealthily to a single apartment in a back slum: him born to a snug inheritance, or at all events floated easily over five seasons by affluent relations, and him who has narrow appliances, and no friends. The sage professor exerts himself equally for the advantage of both; *he* has his own opinion of the student with the diamond pin who whistles in dumb show on the head of a silvered cane, and of him of the purlieu, who finds time too valuable to be thrown away on whistling, and employs himself in taking notes of the lecture in a short-hand which he has ingeniously taught himself, and which is a secret, *such* a secret, to everybody but himself. These opposites are at length somewhat approximated by an equal license to—to “kill or cure;” they are let loose upon society with equal rights; he of the short-hand note-

book passing strictly at the termination of his fourth academical winter;—he of the diamond pin taking two terms extra of cramming, which a “grinder” pumps into him in the capacity of an intellectual force-pump; he is thus brought up to the mark at a given time, and if successful the new M.D. gives a dinner, and the force-pump expects a gratuity.

These are the extremes of their class: the scale has intermediate gradations; among which are students of forty and fifty years, working harder than others because of the scanty memories these years have left them; others again there are, dissipated, bloated-looking young men, in unbrushed habiliments, lovers of revelry, addicted to pea-jackets, and making constant companions of knob-headed sticks. It is from this class that many an energetic operator emerges—men of nerve, who can brace themselves to use gleaming steel in cold blood upon their fellow men; stern possessors of equal physical and moral courage. They of this stamp leave the physician’s department to others—it is too namby-pamby for them. *Their* field is more practical, down to enthusiasm for the details of anatomical demonstrations and dissections. A man of this class seems equally careless in tying his cravat and handling his scalpel, but in the latter case the carelessness is only seeming; the looker-on may be sure it is assumed, a mask, a simple piece of affectation. This is his failing perhaps, yet there is some good in it, for it looks like confidence in himself; and it is confidence, and no one who is ignorant of the great basis of surgical knowledge—*anatomy*, can assume it. He who grasps his knife with a flourish is no charlatan, but to others it is unseemly. In a physician such behaviour would never do.

Let us limn the portrait of another student: write him down as a type of wrecked ambition and blighted

hopes: the youth of genius striving to rise above poverty, to which he may have been born or reduced. With threadbare coat, and this often not fitting him, with visage beyond youth thoughtful, he carries with him an aspect which tells the rich and self-indulgent that his existence is one of privation. He trudges zealously from professor to professor, with feet chilled by wet and steaming garments, and thus his days are passed. His nights are spent in poring over old editions of elementary works, purchased at cheap stalls, to "the light of other days," a halfpenny candle. But he has the "integer vitæ," the "mens conscia recti" within: he is never absent from a lecture, let the rain fall or the sleet drive. And wherefore? because he is probably indebted to the lecturer for a gratuitous ticket of admission, and he would not show ingratitude. This gentleman (for such he is, had he even been the son of a ragman) has nothing in common with him of the diamond pin: they never recognize each other, although occupying the same bench, and bent upon the same errand; the one never expects a nod; the other sees no nobility in the bestowal of it. But when the ordeal of examination comes, the tables are often turned, for then the threadbare coat more frequently ousts the garment of fashionable build, for the former passes with *éclat*, whilst the latter *slips* through by a close shave.

The former becomes, perhaps, a village surgeon in a remote and poverty-stricken district—he takes long rides over moors, or lives by diving into obscure courts and alleys, science sinking into "senna and salts." His gay competitor starts in another orbit: he blazons his name on two square feet of brass, and becomes the tenant of a goodly mansion in a good street of the metropolis; perhaps he starts a carriage—"sink or swim" is his motto; and he thinks externals of paramount import-

ance. Success to this man is within the scope of possibility, for the public is a coy mistress, and may sometimes thus be won; far more likely is it, however, that at the expiration of a year, or of two at the most, his brass ticket is no more seen. He breaks down.

These are the extremes of the profession; all that is useful or scientific may be looked for in the intermediate grades, or among men who have risen from them. Who are the useful members? who are the quacks? who are abundantly paid for their labour, and who labour abundantly without any payment at all? The public which employs them must say, with perhaps a hint upon that question from the Horse Guards, the Admiralty, and Leadenhall Street. That much real science pervades the body, no one can doubt, but it is not quite so well ascertained whether that science has in its several channels and innumerable atoms become a great aggregate by which disease may be cured; whether it does not fall short at the very point wherein medicine is interesting to mankind.

CHAPTER II.

PHILOSOPHY UNDER DIFFICULTIES.

THERE were four of us in "the Doctor's" private laboratory, a tolerably-sized room on the lower or sunk story of a house in one of the best streets of Edinburgh. "The Doctor" was a precise man, and as yearly his senior pupil took his degree or diploma, he was replaced by a fresh man, so that a year's difference in point of study existed between each pupil. It was expected by the old Doctor that, during the hours when there were no lectures, our time was being spent in this room, in *study*, and in mutually aiding each other.

The senior pupil, commencing or running through his fourth year, was considered by those under him to be of high standing in the profession; moreover, he was intrusted with the care of many patients among the poorer classes. He was often a shrewd fellow, and the senior pupil to whom I now allude was a singularly shrewd fellow, and passed smartly, and with *éclat*, just as the clock struck.

None of the four, of which I formed one at this period,

were reprobates, or night disturbers of the peace, or idle fellows naturally, or blockheads, yet when I look back and try to calculate how little we acquired in that comfortable room, with its blazing fire and five quaint old arm-chairs with spoked backs, (for there was one for the Doctor when he visited our sanctum for the purposes of examination,) I feel much regret at the loss of time; and wonder almost how it happened; for in that apartment we might have learnt much.

"The Doctor" was at the head of the scale of second rate practitioners: had he not been modest he might have pushed himself into the first, and no disparagement to the grade. He was a most amiable man, with the weal of his unworthy pupils much at heart, and one who, at fifty, did not neglect his own advancement in the press for time of a family medical man. Nevertheless, under his mild sway we acquired less than we might have done, for good-fellowship sadly interfered with study. How then did we get that elementary lore which qualified us for degrees? At the morning dissecting-table, and in our little dormitories between 10 P.M. and 3 A.M.; and from these "society" was, by mutual consent, strictly excluded.

It is with "the low room" we have to do. We sat round the fire and attended particularly to the supplying of it with coals: the junior being "boots," made up "the Doctor's" prescriptions—a mode of practice common in that day, and each pupil took care to have a volume within easy distance of his hand, as "the Doctor" sometimes gave little warning of his advent. The time therefore slipped away in pleasant conversation suitable to the tastes of young men from eighteen to twenty years, and if anything professional was mooted, it was more likely to be practical than theoret-

ical, such as a voluntary submission to be blooded for the advantage of the lately articulated Rudkin, who had never drawn blood, and was burning to plunge his lancet deep into the vein of his immediate senior, irrespective of arteries, which he looked upon as light things; or it might resolve itself into a neat series of experiments in soda-water, serving a twofold purpose of illustrating a chemical action, and refreshing the parched fauces of the second pupil, who perhaps could not give a very distinct account of every hour in the last fifteen.

There was one great failing pertaining to the society of the "low room," asserted by "the Doctor" to be ungentlemanly, unprofessional, and not very far removed in his opinion from vice; and this, I am proud to say, was the only cause of dissension between the mild grey-headed practitioner and his unworthy pupils; it was a decided taste for tobacco. It had crept into the "low room" years before, under the auspices of some very daring mind, but so far back as to be unknown to us. We often expressed a belief that "the Doctor" knew; if he did, he never divulged the delinquent: we would have asked him, but conscience deterred us. The practice however had become amalgamated with the "low room" regulations, and had for a time been the inaugural misery of every junior pupil, who felt himself bound to acquire the habit, whether consonant with the natural predisposition of his own membranes or not.

A little cleft, caused by the heat in the masonry of the fire-place, contained four common clay pipes, curtailed in the fair proportions of their stalks, and blackened to an ebon hue by the essential oil they had absorbed. What a power of absorption they must have had for that especial oil? had it been blue-pill

or iron, how would it have been? But these pipes were curiosities, and no little import was attached to them; with the tubes broken off within two inches of the bowls, more unexceptionable articles of the kind could not have been detected in the jaws of a cinder crone. Like violins of Cremona, and certain other rarities, these pipes acquired increasing value day by day, on the score of antiquity; a whiff of any of these, taken by an uninitiated hand, would have certainly illustrated the action of that class of remedies termed emetics.

“The Doctor” very properly condemned this habit in his pupils; not that he could prove it against any individual, but he suspected it of pertaining to all, being led to this conclusion by the fumes which annoyed him on the occasions of his visits. To do the members of the “low room” justice, they by no means wantonly deprecated their teacher’s anger, but on the contrary exerted themselves strenuously to conceal any consequences which might prove themselves offensive. The better to accomplish this end “Rules and Regulations” were drawn out, sealed and signed by each pupil, in which it became a statute:—

“That, during the enjoyment of the ‘weed,’ at least two inches of the upper half of the window be opened and allowed to remain open, whatever wind may blow.”

In the same meritorious code it was enacted, that:—

“Not more than two members shall indulge in smoking at one and the same time; that those members who happen to be in turn for duty at the pipes, shall, *ex officio*, as holders of the pipes, be for the time being possessors of chairs on either side of the hob, to enable the smokers the more effectively and conveniently to direct the produce of their labours up the chimney.”

And it was further enacted, to render the last men-

tioned statute conducive to the contemplated end, that:—

“Any one detecting a smoker’s caput carelessly, or in defiance of this regulation, projecting more than six inches beyond the stone archway, he, the detector, whoever he may be, is instantly vested with authority to knock the smoker’s said caput against the ledge, in exact conformity with his powers of so doing.”

This provision, at the time it was proposed, was expected to be productive of the greatest comfort and freedom of action to the members of the “low room.” But when it had “passed into law,” it was found that the last clause of the enactment worked better for some than for others, a theoretical discovery broached by the junior pupil, who philosophically strengthened his argument by experiment, he contriving to get his head jammed more frequently than any other member. The senior pupil, however, asserted that such unequal working was common in Acts of Parliament sanctioned by both Houses, and confirmed by crowned heads.

At length this body-working law became a grievance, and with a spirit highly honourable to the senior and strongest member, whose head had a comparative immunity, that gentleman, open to the necessity thereof, proposed and carried a reform; and whilst the junior pupil wondered at the virtue of the senior man, he rubbed his hands, for it was rumoured, and soon afterwards given out, that the coming pupil on Mr. Tres-sidor’s vacating, stood six feet two in his stockings, and was reported not to be partial to having his head in chancery. But the reform decidedly improved the social condition of the party, and added much to the refinement of it; not that it had been corrupt—far from it, for the members of the “low room” scorned

many pastimes common to young communities. There were no carvings with old scalpels and penknives on the table; no artistical diagrams with charcoal on the walls; neither was the poker nor the tongs twisted fantastically, as might have been expected, although the former was burnt to a very remarkable degree of attenuation. Such freaks would have been too tangible a proof of trifling, and highly offensive to "the Doctor's" eye. As it was, his nose alone suffered; nor did I ever, save on one occasion, know of an instance in which he detected the ebony pipes either in the mouths of smokers or carelessly exposed.

The occasion alluded to was memorable in the annals of the "low room;" and, I doubt not, the secretary made an entry of such an unusual circumstance in the transactions of the body: I regret much that I have not the minute to quote from. I have, however, a vivid recollection of it, for it made an impression both individually and collectively on the occupants of the "low room," which has in virtue of years acquired a tinge quite approaching to the classical.

It was "the Doctor's" custom to pass at least one hour every day with his pupils, conversing medically, putting simple queries to the raw man, and gradually creeping up the scale of abstruseness until he came to the senior pupil, who on the day he came "senior," was dubbed by "the Doctor" "Mister," a title supposed to confer certain authority over the three juniors, who were invariably addressed by their Christian names; and so completely had this custom become a standing order, that without contention of any kind the junior pupils followed "the Doctor's" example, and never upon any occasion forgot to address the senior pupil by this honourable and distinguishing title. If an indistinct pronounciation of the first vowel in

"Mister," gave the senior pupil reason to suppose that the first letter in the alphabet had been substituted, a punch in the epigastrium was pretty sure to follow.

It was "the Doctor's" custom therefore to examine the pupils daily; but, owing to the extent of his practice, it was impossible for him to set aside any special sixty minutes for this purpose. Consequently, "the Doctor's" visits were occasionally untimely and inconvenient; although when not incommoded by tobacco-smoke or a temporary brewing of soda-water, we were one and all happy to see "the Doctor," and indeed, I believe, we all loved him. But mild as was his disposition, the good old man occasionally broke out, when a recent perfume of "the weed" more pungent than ordinary pervaded the "low room." Suppose then the members assembled, two at the table and two at the hobs; the latter exhaling like the funnels of as many steamboats, whether on the screw or any other principle, one being the senior pupil "Mister" Tressidor, when the peculiar slipping sound of "the Doctor's" feet passed over the stone-paved lobby, and in far too short a space "the Doctor" was amongst us. The occupiers of the hob-berths had severally gulped an enormous mouthful of smoke, and one had succeeded in depositing his pipe in the niche of the masonry; but the senior pupil, unable to do so, and sensible of the impossibility of doing so unobserved, had thrust his "dudeen" under a volume of Sydenham, which lay open on the table. The moment was critical; "the Doctor" had no sooner entered than certain of his muscles, nasal and laryngeal, having some interest in the functions of sneezing and coughing, were instantly set in motion, and to a painful degree. The mild grey-haired master of unworthy pupils looked round the room, as if in search of a blue-

bottle, and intent on its destruction; it was only a look of astonishment, an expression of it by words he scarcely could manage, and we were almost sorry he could not give us a handsome setting-down, for in a sudden fit of remorse we could have crushed the long-cherished ebony stained pipes under the heels of our bluchers.

"Gentlemen! Mister Tressidor! Wilmington! Thomas! I fear you have been smoking: and it is such an odious habit; pray give it up; do give it up; and oblige me."

"The Doctor's" respiratory organs were at intervals convulsed during this short exhortation, and I believe we all mourned over the exertion; the more so that "the Doctor" was a meagre worn-out man, and looked as if he had no lungs. Indeed he had only one, and his next medical neighbour, through jealousy, asserted that he *might* infect his patients.

"Gentlemen! I really must go; I cannot stay; I must give up these little professional conversations if this practice is not discontinued. Do oblige me; it would make me *so* happy, for I consider the hour passed with you as *half a day gained*—you get an hour's benefit, I get four."

Wasn't this a mild and amiable and generous speech?

"Don't go, Dr. Hammond, if you please," we simultaneously volunteered, for we felt hurt by his kindness.

"Well, gentlemen, to oblige you I will punish myself; I know it won't occur again. Suppose then that Thomas and William answer a few elementary questions, and then, Mister Tressidor, you and Wilmington may do a little in this way, and he significantly placed his hand on a volume of a work treating of tropical climates and their diseases, a favourite theme with "the Doctor," for he had served in India with a royal corps, and was very partial to those of his pupils destined for

public service. Turning to the junior pupil, he said:—

“William, describe the position and general appearance of the Atlas?”

William was an aspirant and a very idle aspirant to medical reputation of eight months or thereabouts, without study, and had not the faintest notion of the proper answer. Sitting close to this bright genius I could not resist the opportunity of whispering the solution, which he desperately bolted, like a shark at a piece of pork.

“A conical mountain of great height, in the north-west corner of Africa.”

And William would, no doubt, have proceeded further, but for the uncontrolled laughter which passed round the circle, interrupting him. He looked all sorts of pointed things. “The Doctor” was about to pass a question to “Thomas,” who had the advantage of William by a whole year, when a renewed fit of coughing seized him, and an aggravated perfume of tobacco spread through the “low room.” “The Doctor” again became grave; he could not amass a proof for a new accusation, yet his olfactory nerves indubitably indicated that tobacco was slowly undergoing the process of carbonization. He was the only one of the party ignorant of the cause: to the four pupils the ghost-like corkscrews of smoke, that escaped from under the volume of Sydenham, told too plainly that the senior pupil’s pipe had not gone out. “The Doctor” had changed his position a little, and was absolutely and unwittingly hanging over the noxious vapour, which seemed to be directed by some unlucky agency into his very nostrils. He was too innocent, too unsuspecting, to detect the cause of this annoyance; or probably he did not wish to

do so, for the discovery must have entailed upon us another rebuke. After a third series of coughing, and having looked his hopefuls steadily in the face, he arose, and most politely wished us good evening.

We were all much chagrined, and smoked no more that night; and our remorse was much increased by hearing "the Doctor" say to "Bill, the boy," as he met him in the lobby:—

"William! I hope you always pay attention to the fire in the "low room."

Yes! we all heard that query, and when Bill came in with a further supply of coals he might have noticed its effects, if he had looked sharply.

"Bill," said the senior pupil, "do you think you could stand a couple of ounces or so to-night. Mr. William there is very anxious to have a phlebotomy case. I have no doubt he will come down handsomely; it's as good as a shilling found?"

"'Feared I can't, Sir! Mister Thomas bled me last week, and my arm is not well yet, it looks fretty; besides I think he took more blood than you or Mister Walford used to do."

"Very well, Bill! Mister William must wait a few days."

Bill was a thick-set boy of all work and rapid blood-making powers; with good constitution, and a skin for the most part easily healed. Perhaps, at this era, the "fretteness" he complained of indicated the effects of frequent and unnecessary blood-letting, but we were too blinded by science to remark that circumstance. He had originally submitted to be operated on by Tressidor three years and a half before, through the compromising medium of a shilling; and finding it a profitable job, and that the amount realized, if spent on porter, soon replaced the abstracted blood-corpuscles,

he was usually ready to undergo the operation, and with alacrity. It was, no doubt, a lucky circumstance for Bill that he inherited from his progenitors a powerful constitution, for *he sold it to us*, doling it out at a shilling a "go." Phlebotomy then was in its hey-day, the best men of the day seldom laid it aside until death said "it must be done." Bill had a tenderness for the under-housemaid; the under-housemaid was always observed with red eyes after Bill had submitted to venesection, and Bill looked a shade more vapid for a day or two after it.

As a consequence of frequent calls in the cause of science, Bill's arms were considerably scarred, and one day these scars drew the attention of "the Doctor," whilst Bill washed bottles with his sleeves up; and to "the Doctor's" enquiries Bill aptly responded that he had been a month in hospital with inflammation of the lungs.

"Very acute case it must have been, very: frightful depletion!" muttered "the Doctor."

Numerous scientific modes of passing time suggested themselves to the members of the "low room." "The Doctor's" favourite cat had been an object of interest from the frequent galvanic experiments it had been the means of illustrating. With a wild eye and a staring coat it crept about the cellar and wash-houses as if proscribed. It was a black cat, and could not, when searched for, be distinguished from the coals, except by its eyes, which gleamed from under irregularly shaped pieces, behind which it crouched. We dubbed him "Faust," and even "the Doctor" came to know this; and, tickled with the conceit, he acquiesced in the appellation, for the cat was of a gender suitable to the name.

"That cat has something in him far beyond feline

nature," remarked Dr. Hammond, upon seeing "Faust" for a moment, as he dashed in a fit of temporary mania from a wash-house in the back yard to a coal-cellar in the front area, every hair standing erect as if permanently and positively electrified. "Epilepsy, catalepsy, trance, in fact every kind and variety of abnormal nervous action, has he shown during the last year, except perhaps, hysteria."

"He may have that too by-and-by," ventured William, the junior pupil.

"Then we shall change his name to Mephistopheles, and give him over to you for dissection," said "the Doctor," laughing heartily.

But although "the Doctor" laughed, he could not account for the failing health and mental alienation of his favourite.

The character of "the Doctor" must be already apparent and that it was not devoid of seasonable mirth. He had many sources of pleasure and some of joy; not the least, indeed a great pleasure with him, was that of seeing his senior pupil yearly take a degree or a diploma; and how he was thus yearly gratified, when so much time was idly spent, is wonderful to dwell upon. Each senior, as the season, however, came round, had for many years kept up "the Doctor's" credit and his own, until William, as I afterwards learnt, broke the uniformity by needing an additional year.

On the evening of the day in which the ceremony of "capping" is gone through, it was "the Doctor's" custom to have his pupil's legs under his own mahogany, not in the capacity of pupils, but as special guests, and along with these a few intimate friends of all parties: we jocularly called it the "Peterloo banquet" on this anniversary. On these occasions "the Doctor" took special care to state, that the festivity was in honour of

the M.D. newly fledged from his own professional nest. He paid marked attention to the new holder of official parchment, placed him on his right hand, and delighted to honour him; and never upon any occasion was he observed to omit the new title when addressing him. When the cloth was removed, ay! then it was that "the Doctor" came out unvarnished; then it was that the host arose from his hospitable chair, having previously ascertained that every glass was filled to the brim, and proposed *the* toast of the evening, "the health, long life, and professional prosperity of the new graduate," which was invariably drunk with applause.

But this was not a bare proposal of health-drinking; for the worthy host did not forget to recall all the good qualities of his late pupil with a minuteness of detail which did credit to his powers of recollection, and he as invariably forgot to make any allusion to his bad points. He would go on chalking out for him, in the most wonderful and graphic manner, a long and brilliant course of professional success; digressing through the enthusiasm of the moment into brief and desultory notices of his own early career; now with a snatch at Salamanca, or an incident of Badajoz, and even going so far back as Seringapatam; again amputating the leg of a General of Division whilst yet on the field, and extracting innumerable bullets from curious lurking-places (where it defied all the powers of imagination to find out how they got there) in the limbs, and heads, and bodies of a large circle of friends among the private soldiers. Then taking himself up suddenly, as if self-convicted of proposing his own health, he would pass a remark of encouragement to each of his pupils, and on arriving at the junior, he would address *him* more particularly, and in a voice equally pathetic and exhortative would call upon him to follow in the footsteps of the new graduate.

At this epoch of the evening our disengaged ideas frequently reverted to smoking "negrohead," and an occasional necessity for soda-water.

None may say how, each year, we envied the new man of parchment, and how the feelings of each varied as he found himself one year nearer a legal consummation of his toils. Dr. Tressidor had already come out strong in a brass plate measuring three feet by one, and then it was *my* turn; being intended for an Indian appointment, and more deeply interested in that quarter than in others I especially requested "the Doctor" to dwell at great length upon the Seringapatam reminiscences, which he did delightedly. Tippoo evidently had a close shave that day, the closest he ever had; "the Doctor's" knowledge of military matters was quite surprising—thus *I* was off the stage.

Thomas sleeps his last sleep within "the Palisades" at Port Royal, and William, for aught I can tell, is still being blackened by the bilge-water of a Queen's ship.

CHAPTER III.

EPISODES OF PARIS.

I HAD reason to expect my appointment within six months, an interval which, at "the Doctor's" suggestion, I determined on spending in Paris, and making my own observations on the practice, medical and surgical, at the great hospitals there. I thought, moreover, that I could put them up to a thing or two; for such anticipations are not uncommon with very young physicians.

Those were not the days of steam, so bidding "the Doctor" an adieu, which was fated to be the last, I stepped on board a smack in Leith harbour with a mainsail so large that it needed machinery to hoist it. A snug party, inclusive of some of no mean position, were fain at this period to go to sea in Leith smacks, which were by no means considered such a humble medium of transportation. Nevertheless we were "bunkered" off in a very limited number of cubic inches; but withal it was a comfortable mode of travelling. On this occasion I met with an agreeable person, bent like myself towards the French metropolis: we took to each other kindly, and we ultimately

decided on a temporary junction of interests, at least to a certain extent, which was rendered expedient in consequence of this person's knowledge of France, French, and the French.

One day's gale, three days' calm off the Yorkshire coast near Flamborough Head, two days creeping along-shore, and two days among sand-banks with the lead ever going, brought us to the Thames, an average voyage for the period. Modern travellers would sneer at this no doubt, but we had temperaments fitted for the times we then lived in. I was much interested in my first passage up the Thames, but many of us took advantage of a wonderful craft called a river steamer, a class of vessels then coming into vogue, and from Gravesend to the Tower things passed by so quickly that I had no time to examine anything; note-taking was quite out of the question. I have tried the latter on several occasions on that river, and have given it up as impossible. The river Thames is a wonderful kaleidoscope even to the naked eye: they say it is more wonderful still when viewed in the field of a solar microscope, and quite as difficult to paint with pen and ink.

I would have tarried in London, but my new acquaintance was in a hurry; and as I expected another opportunity for that purpose, I thought it unwise to remain behind him. He was a most excellent guide, and on the day following our arrival we repaired to the passport office, and on the way, he said: "We shall have our portraits taken; mine they say is difficult to take—just mark the painter while he takes it!"

The passport-office, which was a mouldy-looking apartment, in a locality now probably blotted out from the London map by new improvements, but which I

think stood somewhere between the Exchange and London Bridge, was half filled by applicants for passports and counter-signatures. A clerk, who was evidently of French extraction, was busy "painting portraits," as my friend Mr. Gayleard called it. It must have been daubing, from the rapidity with which he scored them off; a glance and then a jotting — another glance and another jotting, and so on. The operation is one which gives rather an unpleasant sensation to a man possessing the "*mens conscia recti*." It is a piece of natural ill-breeding in any government making an honest man submit to it; Mr. Gayleard thought so too. When his turn came the clerk took a glance at him, and made a jotting, during which I observed my friend's countenance to undergo a remarkable and instantaneous change of expression. The clerk then looking up, drew his pen through the word and re-wrote it; whilst making this correction, Gayleard's face again changed to a perfectly new contour—again the clerk expunged, and rather hastily and impatiently this time, by which the face had changed again. The clerk looked up quite wild: the "lily of France" had been insulted:—

"Pray Sare! how many faces have you got? Pardon, Monsieur?"

"Sir!" replied my friend, "my face in a general way is very easily taken: it is only in the matter of noses that artists find any difficulty. Excuse my nose for its versatile disposition, but really I have no control over it; it is a most disobedient nose."

"Sare! I fear I must refuse a passport under these circumstances, unless your nose mends its manners."

"Very good, sir; it cannot be helped: such little disappointments in life must be endured sometimes," said Gayleard with the utmost good humour: "I shall

stay at home." He took my arm and led me from the office. We went into a dining-room in Bucklersbury, and criticised their roast beef and brown stout, my new friend as gay and debonnaire as if, like me, he had passed muster.

"Then I must go to Paris alone," said I.

"By no means," said he, "it's all right."

"How so?"

"Wait until we have dined: it is certainly astonishing what an effect a good dinner has upon a man's appearance: who knows but my nose may be much improved thereby?"

Those were the days of long great coats which flapped about the limbs of the wearer, and distributed the mud lavishly. I had a white garment; my friend rejoiced in a drab-coloured. When our repast was finished, Gayleard took mine from the peg and put it on quite unceremoniously; indeed, I thought he had done so in an absent fit, but it was quite intentional. He then took a travelling-cap from his own pocket and put it on in lieu of his hat.

"Just wait here for me, I shall be back in half an hour," he said, turning round and showing me an entirely new countenance. He was as good as his word, and returned before that time with a promise of his passport. I requested him to show me his facial secret: it was entirely attributable to the nose, the muscles of which, leagued with a very mobile scalp, gave him a great power of feature.

"I could get a dozen passports in a day, if it wasn't for the expense of the thing."

Two days thereafter, Mr. Gayleard and I started per coach for Dover. It was a long day's work on the outside of the "Dragonfly," which, with four horses of high mettle, did not let the grass grow: stagecoaching

was at its acmé, and the "Dragonfly" was the crack turn-out of the day. Gayleard was informed at the first stage, at which we changed, that the coachman was Lord Frederick Fuddle, who, having gone it rather fast on the turf, had taken to its prototype the road. Lord Frederick created quite a sensation on the Dover line of milestones, for he had the merit of casting over the turnpike world an aristocratic air to which it had hitherto been a stranger. The half-crown which Gayleard and I severally bestowed upon his lordship, on arriving at Dover, by no means put him to the blush; he had quite got over all squeamishness on the subject of half-crowns. We had here an excellent opportunity of making an aristocratic acquaintance, for Lord Frederick was very approachable, and did not object to supply himself from any cigar-case on the outside of the "Dragonfly;" but we had no vocation in that direction, and thus the opportunity was lost.

Four hours of a passage to Calais—a night passage—was not so bad in those days. Gayleard spoke French fluently, a very lucky accomplishment, for no sooner had we got within the harbour mouth, and long before landing, I found my stock of that language had suddenly been drawn a check upon: I could not make three words available, and could not understand one. Nobody *would* understand me, and yet I was wont to think *my* French very good French indeed. Gayleard came to my assistance, and rescued me from a labyrinth of words. But for the necessity I felt for a cicerone, I might scarcely have encouraged that intimacy, which this gentleman's frankness of manner and gaiety of disposition naturally led to, for some of his eccentricities, particularly the passport-anecdote, left an unpleasant impression on my mind; still there was such a seeming mixture of generosity, and fun, and

good humour, in which vulgarity showed very little, that it was impossible to dislike him, or, indeed, to avoid intimacy.

Of a naturally unsuspicious temperament, I determined to be friends, until a good cause for not being so took place. At Gayleard's advice we took the cabriole in the diligence, which compartment we occupied with a Swiss, one Ferdinand Busigny. Gayleard, who was an artist following after the French school of art, which seemed to suit his genius, had resided in Paris in his boyhood, and was quite at home on the other side of the Channel.

It was a weary forty-eight hours from Calais to Paris. All that I could do, I could realize no great amount of sentiment from it, and yet I had "Sterne's Journey" in my pocket, and now and then referred to it. It was only when we reached the gate of Montreuil, and were pounced upon by a party lying in wait for us, that I felt any interest. Here, however, was a turmoil: had we made an unsuccessful attempt to gain possession of the fortification, a greater clatter could scarcely have been made. The non-commissioned officer examined us minutely, and most of our luggage underwent an overhauling. Having passed Montreuil we relapsed into ennui, for the grass was growing in the streets of Abbeville; and before we reached Beauvais, the second night was closing in around us. Punchy horses devoid of breeding, and consequently having no Lord Frederick to drive them, but curiously harnessed in a tag-rag-and-bobtail fashion, with traces of untanned hide, and urged on by a postilion apparently just escaped from a lunatic asylum, and three-fourths made up of boots, deserved attention: the postilion did everything by jerks, and in the utmost distraction, mental and bodily, as if some one was pulling a string in some

mysterious corner, thereby suddenly throwing him into a dangerous state of convulsion; upon the same ingenious principle that certain toys very popular in nurseries are got up. But darkness came, and we could no longer watch the postilion and his team. Sleeping upright two nights on a stretch, with the wind in one's face, is to a certain extent objectionable, except that there is a lavish supply of fresh air.

In the grey of the morning, and about six A.M., we drew up at an auberge; and a tiny cup of coffee, or a still tinier glass of brandy, was brought to any one who wished it,—“cruel, cruel, coffee!”—so hot and so black, as if taken fresh from a cutting in a peat-bog; so aromatic, and so little time in which to drink it, before a new set of punchy strawberry-coloured horses hobbled off with us on the last stage, which appeared to be the longest and most monotonous, from the road being straight, and paved with large rough stones, trying both to wheels and back-bones. Then, as we came nearer Paris, we overtook pairs of mounted gendarmes, who, like gamekeepers, had been on the outlook early; and by-and-bye we came to “the barriers,” where our portmanteaus were instantly searched, and our temporary passports examined.

At this moment the experience, advice, and knowledge of the language possessed by Mr. Gayleard, stood me in great need, for I had to cast my domestic knowledge of the language entirely overboard. Through his exertions, I was soon in possession of a snug apartment in the Luxembourg district:—he procured another for Mr. Busigny, who being a Genevese, and not well acquainted with Paris, was glad to avail himself of such an opportunity; and a third for himself. We soon took to our several occupations, and interfered very little with each other. Busigny was in “the law,” and

professed an intention of learning the practice of the Parisian Courts; Gayleard spent his days in the galleries of the Louvre and Luxembourg, in making copies—he was an excellent copyist, and when I asked him if he ever painted originals, he would say:

“Better make a good copy than a bad picture: the former will sell, the latter will not.”

This was not a great prospect, but the maxim upon the whole was strictly philosophical, and based upon inductive laws, for he seemed to have many orders to make copies, and very few for pictures.

I soon set about spending my time to the very best advantage. Six A.M. was the hour for hospital visits; and I divided the six working-days by giving two to Hôtel Dieu, two to La Pitié, one to La Charité, and one to the Military Hospital, over which the noted Baron Larrey presided. I cannot look back to the great kindness and complaisance shewn to foreign students by the scientific luminaries of the French metropolis, without expressing my sense of the great obligation I owe to them. Baron Dupuytren, the spirit and genius of French surgery, in his little world upon an island of the Seine, received me with great courtesy, and from time to time, as opportunity offered, made me specially acquainted with young men of creditable studentship and promise, and of my own standing:—my passport and degree were an introduction to scientific quarters; thus I remember the now great names of Parisian medicine and surgery, Chomel, Velpeau, Andral, and Ricord. Of the talented lecturers who then filled the places these now fill, not one remains.

Baron Dupuytren was a little squat man, with a massive under-jaw, a capacious skull, and eyes as piercing as diamond chips. He bore a singular resemblance to Napoleon; it was said he was a Jesuit—be

that as it may, its influence did not extend to cutting off legs and arms. An old statute in connexion with his office, was that of a hospital roll of bread (twisted "more Parisiano," and much like a junk chopped off the end of a hempen cable) and a bottle of wine being placed at his disposal daily. The Baron, on leaving after his morning's duties, never omitted to trudge off with the roll under his arm; the bottle of wine he never took, probably it was too cumbersome.

Baron Larrey was the light of military surgery at Val de Grâce. He was a little fussy man. It struck me that the style of his surgery was behind the times; he adhered too much to the horrors of the art, which some considered as one result of the Russian campaign, in the miseries of which the Baron had his full share. He was invariably followed in the ward by assistants carrying charcoal, irons of all shapes and sizes, and a pair of bellows, for the performance of the actual cautery, his favourite method of counter-irritation. The heated iron was in constant use; he scored limbs and back-bones most unmercifully, and turned therefrom to tell us an anecdote of the "grande armée" and the Emperor, with which extraordinary man he was a great favourite. He would bind up a fracture in dozens of folds of sere-cloth, keeping in for many weeks the products of inflammatory action, which, on being opened, would display a nicely united limb among a filthy accumulation.

Lisfranc presided over the surgical department at La Pitié. He was a noble looking person of great energy and courage, and a strong contrast in appearance to his medical colleague Dr. Louis, whose researches into the nature of pulmonary consumption were feelingly typified by the narrow flat-chested physician, whose physical conformation told too truly what had led him

to the investigation. He was a long, pale, hollow-breasted man, with high shoulders. The same feeling led Laennec to that train of reasoning which gave rise to the invention and use of the stethoscope, a simple wooden tube to listen through. In those days it was a grand subject for ridicule. What a deal of wit resulted from it! It was a wise generation that laughed at poor Laennec, who, like Dr. Louis, and before him, sunk under the disease upon which they certainly threw more light than any men before or since.

At the Sorbonne Gay Lussac lectured, that leviathan of science, in little unprepossessing bulk. Besides these, there were Cruveilhier, great in anatomy; and Orfila the great poison-chemist. These are men whose voices it is something to have listened to. Each in his department could get no higher—they were planets around which a body of student satellites revolved daily. Without detracting from the admiration which such minds drew from the ingenuous youth who listened to them, there was one effect of such converse which could not be concealed—namely, a devotion to the professional views of the teacher, on account of the man who taught them. However creditable this may be to the affection, it is fatal to the progress, of the physician; and yet it is a feature of every school, and of every age; part and parcel of medical science, perhaps of human nature.

Thus I saw little of Gayleard, and still less of Busigny, who spent much of his time, according to Gayleard, in frivolous pastime and places of public resort. When the Genevese *did* pay a visit to my apartment, it was generally when Gayleard was present; and, on such occasions, he would probably propose a visit to a hazard-table, or a private hand at piquet. We never indulged him; but on one visit,

wherein he had been rudely importunate, Gayleard said:

“Monsieur! I never play; but be contented: for, were I to do so, I should win from you all you have at the very first sitting.”

I was interested, and listened to them. The words made the hot-headed Genevese still more addle-pated; and he taunted and teased Gayleard so much that he said:

“Just bear witness, Walford! to this youth’s folly. I must give him a lesson: pray watch us!”

They sat down to piquet; and each placed by his side, in five-franc pieces, the amount of his present funded property. I pursued my study, only glancing at the heaps of silver occasionally. They were soon too intent to mind *me*, and on, and on, and on they played, until well into the morning, at which time the Genevese gave in: he had lost every fraction, as Gayleard had predicted.

“Sacré!” muttered the former; “eet ees la fortune de guerre,” and he shrugged his shoulders.

“By no means, M. Busigny! it is the force of experience,” Gayleard replied, with perfect calmness.

“Come, come!” said the Genevese, “anoder time I may clear out *your* exchequare. I am said to play ver well,—*très bien*.”

“Look you, Monsieur! take your coin again, and come to-morrow night, I shall then win it from you once more!”

“Den you must be de d——l,” said the Swiss.

“Not at all. I am a simple artist, and *never was a gambler*.”

The Genevese, much astonished at the liberality and the subsequent threat, took his money and retired, only apparently half-pleased,—his pride was hurt. Gayleard remained.

"I am glad that you have returned that silly fellow's money, Gayleard. You were *too* fortunate; are you always so?"

"Always; that is, when I play, which I never do."

"But you have done so this evening, and have won everything."

"True, but it was by compulsion, and as a lesson to that gasconading Swiss. I have restored him his money, notwithstanding which he will go and lose it to some one less scrupulous."

"Could you win it again, Gayleard?"

"Again and again."

"And by fair dealing?—pray excuse me."

"Go on, I quite merit your suspicions."

"Did you acquire these accomplishments at the gaming-table?"

"I did; but it was by observation, not by practice."

"Gayleard, you are quite a puzzle. Forgive me for being distrustful of you; I would willingly have the suspicion cleared away: I am sure you can do so."

"Have I not done so by returning the money?"

"Only in part, friend Gayleard. In sooth, accomplishments like yours are somewhat dangerous, and far from seemly."

"And yet I am a poor man, and never play."

"I would not judge you harshly, Gayleard, nor yet hastily; you have returned the money far too readily and generously to make a hard decision just."

"Dr. Walford, it is but right that you should know me. Accomplishments like these *are* unseemly, and only valuable at an odd time such as the present. I rarely indulge in them; and when I do so, it is only before those who know me. I will tell you how I acquired them."

"Thank you, Gayleard."

“My father, who was a field officer, and an equerry to royalty, was a gambler. No one knew it; but it was his only means of keeping up a large establishment. In a series of years he became the purchaser at times of gambling and conjuring tricks, which he used in his secret trade. In order to make himself perfect at these, he needed an opponent, in whom he could trust; and to this degradation he brought his only son. Naturally quick of my age, I answered the purpose well, and too well, for I learnt the secrets piecemeal: of course they were safe. He is dead; 'tis needless to say how. But I took a vow never to play for gain.”

“Which you have this night broken, Gayleard.”

“In letter, but not in spirit; many a man breaks the spirit and adheres to the letter, and feels quite comfortable afterwards. My mother often trembled for me; she feared lest I should become a gambler too; and at her knee I took a willing vow: she—she——”

Gayleard's manner had changed considerably; a chord, not often struck, was thrilling through his frame; but, half-ashamed of his emotion, he took up the now-neglected cards, and, with a perfect seeming carelessness, he went rapidly over a whole series of conjuring tricks, after which he said, in a laughing manner:

“Science might well intend me for a gambler; but honesty makes me a painter—a poor, but yet an honest calling. Why should I work so hard in the Louvre, possessed of such a power, but from a horror of it?”

I shook his hand, feeling quite re-assured; and he, regaining his wonted vivacity, showed me the desire he had to stand well in my estimation. I could not help reverting to the scene in the passport office. I never afterwards had reason to distrust this man. The

Genevese had got enough of him; but the lesson did not cure him of gambling, which is a moral disorder quite incurable.

On returning about noon from a morning's work at the hospitals, some time after the last-mentioned occurrence, and passing Gayleard's apartment, the door of which was open, I heard voices alternately of altercation and remonstrance, which I recognized as those of Gayleard and Busigny. The former was standing over a picture at his easel, palette and brushes in hand; and whilst he twitched away at points here and there, which process he termed "giving finishing-touches," he kept stepping back ever and anon, and scanning the pictorial effect from all sorts of positions, during which he kept up a very animated conversation with our Swiss neighbour, who seemed to be moved almost to tears.

"And you called the French officer 'a poltroon,' and in a public room too. Well, that was bold enough no doubt; there are very few of *my* countrymen would think of doing that. I don't wonder that he wishes to shoot you. If his bullet goes into your head, it won't meet with any brains there. Here is Dr. Walford, perhaps *he* will accommodate you, and be your friend."

"Dr. Walford has no vocation whatever in the way you refer to: he is the greatest ignoramus on such matters," I replied.

"Oh, dare! oh, dare! Docteur Walifur; you are von broder foreignare: I must look to you for von emergence. I nevare mean 'poltroon;' it was on de pinnacle of de moment."

"Then why not say so now, and apologise?"

"He vill not believe: he is von infidel; oh dare! if I had von frend."

"Walford, do oblige him," said Gayleard, taking another survey of his picture through his closed hand, which he had converted into a primitive telescope for the occasion.

"Thank you! but it is quite out of my line of business, and it goes contrary to the way my grain lies."

"Oh dare! oh dare! vat shall I do? de Frenchman's frend vill be here in von little half-hour."

"Will you promise perfect confidence in me and implicit obedience, and that you will apologise to the Frenchman if he will take it? If so, I will be your friend, and try to get you out of this scrape."

"Certainement, Monsieur Gaylar."

"Then go to your apartment and remain there."

No sooner had the Genevese disappeared than Gayleard changed his habiliments, by which time steps were heard ascending, and a knock upon the door followed in due course.

"This is Monsieur Gaylar's apartment, I think;" and a young sub-lieutenant stepped into the room. "I think I am in the presence of Monsieur Gaylar," said he, in his own language; "if so, I am referred to him by Monsieur Busigny, in respect to my friend Lieutenant La Font."

Gayleard outdid the Frenchman in bowing, and I was amused to observe that he had totally thrown off his usual identity in point of feature; no man could have recognised him.

"Your most obedient servant, Monsieur Sub-Lieutenant. M. Busigny is rather hot-headed; of the nervo-sanguineous temperament, as my friend there would say; cannot this little matter be pacifically arranged?"

"No, Monsieur! he called my friend 'a poltroon.'"

"True! and a very ugly name it must have been in the eyes of a young officer of twenty-three; but then

he did not mean it, Monsieur; which makes all the difference. I have his word for that: it came out quite accidentally."

"Sare, I will take no apology. *Your* friend must meet *my* friend in the Bois-de-Boulogne, and prove that he himself is no poltroon."

"Then, if nothing else will do, be it so. To-morrow at 6 A.M. Monsieur Busigny will be ready to be shot: it is his privilege to choose weapons."

The Frenchman bowed and retired, Gayleard seeing him down with great politeness and decorum. On his return he burst out a-laughing, and said,

"Walford! that Spanish-fly-tempered Genevese has run his head against a stone wall. If I cannot get him out of it, these Frenchmen will spit him like a frog; you must give us your services."

"I have no taste for such matters, Gayleard. Indeed I have an objection to them even in my professional capacity."

"These are bad affairs certainly, but I could almost stake my own life on it that no blood shall be drawn; at least it is with this impression and intention that I shall be able thus to manage matters, that I have undertaken them."

"You are a fine fellow, Gayleard," I exclaimed, taking his hand, for I began to have a glimmering of what he had in view. "You are always ready to assist a friend, and your judgment in all matters is quite astonishing: it would be a pity to balk your good intentions for want of assistance."

"That's just it; force Busigny into other and strange hands, and they will blow each other's brains out: the only way to save life is to burn powder."

Gayleard went to a bureau, and took therefrom a

pair of pistols, not of the duello size, but little popguns for the waistcoat pocket.

"Just watch me narrowly, very narrowly, and mark that bit of lead, so that you may know it again," said Gayleard.

I pressed the top of my ring upon it, which left a peculiar impression.

"Watch again!" and he cautiously measured the powder.

"And again!" and he inserted the bullet, poking it down with the end of a pencil which he took from a side-table.

"Now, take the pistol and suppose me to be your opponent! and I stand so," measuring eight paces to the end of the room.

"Exactly so! now fire at me."

"Oh! thank you, but I am quite a baby at this work," said I.

"But I wish you to do so—it will oblige me."

"It will send you into the next world, Gayleard!"

"Tut, tut! man—give me the pistol."

At this epoch the Genevese entered the apartment.

"Busigny! will you stand the Frenchman's fire?"

"Certainement, Monsieur Gaylar, if can get second, —frend."

"Then dress up at that door, and prove it by standing mine. I won't be second to any man unless I know how he is to conduct himself."

"Mais, Monsieur Gaylar! iv you kill me, vy den I cannot vight de Frenchman."

"True, but in that case he will not expect you."

By this time Gayleard had loaded the other pistol, drawing my attention thereto, and making me mark the bullet.

"Now, take your place, Mr. Fireater, and let me see if you are worth running a risk for."

The Genevese took the popgun, and they stood at either end of the room; and never expecting anything beyond this point, I was quite appalled when Gayleard's pistol was discharged.

"Capital! you are a trump, Busigny! I see you are a plucky fellow."

"'Tis ver hard for vight two duel instead ov von."

"That is to try your courage; the Frenchman will no doubt shoot you—you had better go and arrange any matters you may have to settle."

Gayleard once more took his palette and brushes, as if shooting people in cold blood was quite a recreation. The Genevese retired to take the advice given, when Gayleard said:

"Walford! would you look for the place where the bullet struck the wall."

I looked most carefully, but without any success.

"I don't think you could know the bullet if you saw it again."

"I should certainly, if it were uninjured," I replied.

"Are these bullets like them?" and he produced the pieces of lead from his vest pocket. I took the other pistol and examined it: there was no bullet in it.

"Now Walford, we shall make these two rising blisters fight with powder only: as they are ignorant of it, their courage will be needed all the same, and you and I shall have a great advantage on the score of morality."

"Gayleard, your object is praiseworthy, but can you carry it through?"

"Trust me; were your eyes open when I put the bullets in?"

"I marked you steadily."

"And yet I deceived you," said Gayleard, laughing.
"You did."

"And on your guard too; can I fail then before the Frenchmen who don't expect a trick, and whose notice I shall not specially ask as I did yours?"

"I am satisfied, Gayleard, and your feelings in this matter are so correct that I will accompany you. It would do no good to inform the Prefecture."

"They would blow each other to pieces if we did that."

Next morning, a fiacre bore Busigny, Gayleard, and myself, to the Bois-de-Boulogne, through which we drove, until Gayleard, putting his head out, saw a carriage further on. Thereupon we left the fiacre, and soon joined issue with the sub-lieutenant's party. A great scraping and bowing took place; it was absolutely necessary to shoot men with decorum; without it the act would be called assassination. Busigny therefore hung upon the outskirts; Gayleard stepped forward to perform *his* part; I followed, from curiosity, to watch him.

"My friend is unprovided with weapons, being quite a novice, but he will gladly avail himself of Monsieur's," said Gayleard.

The pistols were produced, and a formidable pair they were, having a sort of piratical air of former achievements about them, which seemed to take Gayleard's fancy, but it was all put on.

"These *are* 'marking irons' of the right sort," said Gayleard, as he pricked the vent holes with a pin, and blew into the muzzles to satisfy himself that they were not loaded. He then continued:

"Will Monsieur oblige me with powder and bullets? I will load them under your eye and approval."

He went through the process, and as I watched him

narrowly, I could have sworn that he put the bullets in. I felt quite uneasy.

"Now, Monsieur! choose a weapon for your friend," presenting them to the sub-lieutenant, who took one.

The parties were now placed some fifteen paces from each other, and the word was given. Busigny's pistol was discharged; the Frenchman's hung fire. I observed Gayleard to change countenance; that was nothing with him, but he became deadly pale. Stepping up, however, to the Frenchman, he took his pistol, pricked the hole, and filled the pan afresh with powder. He then took aim, and the weapon was discharged. The colour came rapidly back to Gayleard's face. The two combatants rushed into each other's arms, and hugged each other as if they had been brothers suddenly and unexpectedly meeting after a long absence; complimenting each other on their bravery; and wound up proceedings by insisting on our joining them at dinner that day. Busigny, whose head seemed ever in a whirl, accepted it on his own account.

"Mind you get into no more scrapes, Monsieur!" said Gayleard to the Genevese as we left them, "for I swear that this is the first and the last time I shall stand by you." On our return to Paris, I ventured to ask Gayleard the cause of his emotion.

"Don't you see, Walford, that if the opposite party had examined the remaining pistol and found it unloaded, they might have justly suspected me."

"I see! how stupid I am! I did not think of that, but I could have sworn you put the bullets in."

He took them both from his waistcoat pocket! I wish all duels ended so!

CHAPTER IV.

COIN, COUNSEL, AND 'CUTENESS.

“WHAT a lucky dog you are, Walford!” said an old friend, whom I met in the Strand. “What! going out to India!—an uncommonly lucky dog! Promotion very rapid in that country. Cholera, liver, fever, and that sort of thing. Why you will be a nabob in five years; I wish I was in your shoes.”

This friend turned out not to be quite correct in his calculation of the pace of promotion; for I was, on the very same day informed by another friend, who had been in India, that a zealous endeavour to please, or a great deficiency of knowledge on that subject, had made the former gentleman hasten it by ten years, a portion of human time not altogether insignificant, considering it is the half of a professional life, and the seventh part of three-score and ten. I was assured, however, by my last informant, that as a constitutional feature of the service, promotion was sure to come at last, if I had only patience to wait for it, and provided

always that cholera, fever, and "liver" had patience to wait.

"But," said my friend, "you may still think yourself a lucky fellow. I did so when I was appointed, and I do so still, although fever has given me sundry hints that he would promote me himself. I prefer being thankful for the general run of the most liberal public service extant, to grumbling that the 'loaves and fishes' of it did not fall to my share; and, unbiassed by any extraordinary good fortune, I nevertheless pronounce the service a most generous service. If any pearls should ever be offered me, they may scarcely be deemed premature; I prefer lingering on its virtues, to picking out flaws in its constitution."

These remarks had considerable effect on me. I was informed by my patron, that my appointment waited my acceptance; and I was directed to wait upon a gentleman whose name I think was "Funny;" and, on presenting my card, I was gratified to find myself a person of some consequence in his eyes. The simplicity with which Mr. Funny transacted business was very taking; his affability beyond all praise; and his willingness to push me, a stranger, on in the world, made me think very highly of metropolitan human nature. From Mr. Funny I went to another gentleman, who required me to subscribe to a few necessary questions, as to parentage, age, &c. The age I could understand; but the exact force of the "parentage" I could not arrive at, so I asked, and was informed that such inquiries prevented the admission of "snobs" into the service. A certificate of having arrived at the discretionary age of twenty-one years was required, and was not forthcoming. The want of it entailed upon me the necessity of a journey to dip into the archives of

some northern parish twenty-two years and six months back. It was a hard case; ten pounds sterling would scarcely do it; and I hastened back to the "west end," and threw myself for advice upon Mr. Funny. My better genius was luckily watching over me in the shape of that gentleman, who was suddenly struck with a very bright thought, at least it seemed so to me, placed as I was between the horns of a dilemma. I could have embraced Mr. Funny on the spot, and I wonder that I did not.

"You must make affidavit to your age before the lord mayor, Dr. Walford."

"To anything you please, and to any body you please, and with the greatest pleasure in life," was my joyful reply: and driving eastward to the Mansion House, I had a short and business-like interview with some great personage, who was rigged out in what I must now suppose to be a superannuated suit of the Royal Artillery, blue and gold. Whether this gentleman was the lord mayor or not, I have never been quite certain, nor is it likely that the obscurity will now ever be satisfactorily solved. But if he was not the lord mayor, he did quite as well; for, without any detention, he took a small Bible, made me hold up my right hand, and take an oath. I presumed that the words referred to my *age*, and I considered myself as limited thereto; but, for all that I could tell to the contrary, they might have referred to anything. This concluded, I thanked the gentleman in blue and gold, bowed, and was just going to retire, when he stopped me by stating, that I was indebted to him in the sum of "one shilling."

"And uncommonly cheap of the money," said I, as I placed the coin in his hand. My heart was so open,

that I could have given him half-a-crown, if he would have taken it.

On returning to Mr. Funny, he was well satisfied with this declaration; and said I should have no difficulty in satisfying the authorities. We got on swimmingly: I became more attached to him every minute, for cordiality sprung up between us. He volunteered me an introduction to a friend in the city who was acute in matter of passage and outfit, points upon which I had a very limited experience, an ignorance which I readily acknowledged.

The way being thus so clearly laid out, I prepared for the "east end." Mr. Funny's hand was stretched forth to wish me every success in the sunny clime of my adoption. I grasped the outstretched fin most enthusiastically; and, in a tolerably neat speech for an extemporaneous effort, I signified my regret that I had not sooner had an opportunity of cultivating his acquaintance. I thanked him warmly. Mr. Funny disclaimed all merit vehemently; and I went down stairs feeling that I had parted with a friend.

On arriving at Charing Cross, I took a cab to Leadenhall Street. It served the double purpose of saving time and taking an airing; so the half-crown was well spent. I was set down at the India House. It looked so gloomy, that I thought it was in mourning; but whether in virtue of the habitually lethal news which constantly arrived from the East, or in special respect to the late demise of the Maharajah of Sick-bedabad, which domestic occurrence I had lately seen notified amongst Indian news, I could not tell. Observing a pompous-looking official in a huge brown coat, all becaped, with red collar and cuffs, I bethought me of asking a solution of the foregoing question, but

somehow I hesitated to put it. Had I been three years younger, I am certain I should have done so, for the sombre aspect of the building impressed me strangely. On endeavouring to thread my way through it, I came to the conclusion, that if intricacy of passages and staircases was the object aimed at by the architect, that individual had been eminently successful; and when, upon three occasions afterwards, I traced the network of the Sunderbunds, at the delta of the Ganges, I always thought of him, and wished he had surveyed that distracting district of land and water, for I am sure the duty would have been productive of great delight to a mind so thoroughly bewildered in a brick and mortar sense.

I employed half-an-hour in obeying the directions given me by the official in the brown coat with the red collar and cuffs; passed along lobbies of astonishing length; and in a remote lobby, equivalent in the scale of discovery and geographical science to the cataracts of the Nile, or the source and course of the Niger, I very politely requested permission to pass from two hatless individuals absorbed in low and earnest conversation, who, I thought, had chosen an uncomfortable place therefore, and who, from the bad grace with which they conceded a passage, no doubt considered it their own private property, at all events for the time being, and that my request was audacious. Not to be done so easily, however, I had the temerity to inquire for Mr. Strutt's office. A string of "rights" and "lefts," spoken with city energy, and demonstrative of the extreme value of time in London, gave me such a very clear idea of the office I was in search of, that in a short space I found it necessary to pop my head in at an open door and ask again. Thus I

got on a degree or two of latitude and longitude. At last I determined to have the merit of finding it out for myself; but I was sensible of having a very ill-defined idea of the locality, and this feeling was not lessened when, in *another* quarter of an hour, I entered upon *another* lobby, singularly resembling that in which I had disturbed the mysterious speakers. The analogy was the more striking, as two individuals, similarly dressed, were conversing in much the same manner. I thought this very strange; but being by this time somewhat fatigued, I followed up my request for permission to pass, by an inquiry for Mr. Strutt's office.

"It hasn't moved a jot since you passed, ten minutes since."

"Oh! indeed; excuse my being importunate, but the ground-plan of this building is none of the clearest, and having no sextant I am dependent on dead reckoning."

So much for disturbing two assistant clerks in the "home department" twice within the same half-hour. This incident led me into a train of speculation on the comparative rank and importance of assistant clerks and assistant surgeons, but what had just occurred inclined me to give precedence to the clerks. I resolved, however, to put the question to Mr. Strutt, whose office I at length found.

Mr. Strutt proved to be a most gentlemanly man, but perhaps rather reserved; and a certain hauteur in his bearing made me hesitate to put the question of precedence I had meditated. At length I began to wonder if his reserve could in any way be connected with the incident in the lobby, but I remembered that he could in nowise be cognizant of that little

circumstance. I speedily concluded my business, and in another hour was in my lodgings in Craven Street, Strand.

Next-morning, before the usual business hour, and whilst sitting at breakfast, the room door was thrown open and several gentleman were ushered in by the landlady. There was a sort of rush of them, and they all apologised for the early hour of their visit by stating their anxiety to find me at home. I instantly ordered chairs to be placed for them, and endeavoured to relieve them from a very visible embarrassment by saying how glad I was to see them, which most unaccountably increased their uneasiness, for they looked at each other doubtfully before they would be seated. I then bethought me of the most pleasant manner in which I could acknowledge their attention, for it struck me that it was probably the custom in London to pay such civilities to strangers, and I expressed freely my gratitude to the visitors for finding me out so soon. It was a touching trait of metropolitan life and manners, which for the moment was productive of a gladsome feeling in my breast, and the more so as my experience of it had hitherto been confined to desultory accounts and snatches gleaned from "Bell's Life," none of which embraced the depth of sentiment with which the present was invested in my eyes.

At this point one of the visitors, as if speaking for others as well as himself, hastened to inform me that they were representatives of sundry "outfitting establishments" in the city and "west end," and that the fame of my appointment having reached them, they were emulous of the honour of supplying me with unlimited dozens of calico shirts and slop jeans. Whereupon I saw my mistake, and hastened to repair

it by standing up; when all the outfitting gentlemen stood up, and each thrust forward a card of the special concern which rejoiced in having him. How so many great firms had simultaneously become acquainted with my appointment, and the deficient state of my wardrobe, I never could discover—as I had as yet told no one; and I enquired.

“Excuse me sir, but it is a great secret; one of the great secrets in this great world of London, sir; of business life, sir—you will excuse me, sir,” exclaimed one nearest the door, as if afraid that one of his compeers might inadvertently divulge the great secret in which I performed so prominent a part without any right to a knowledge thereof.

“Certainly! but perhaps one firm is as much as I can manage at a time: I am quite unaccustomed to business life,” I replied.

At this signal of being hard pressed, all but one bowed themselves out; and as shirts and slop-jeans were indispensable, I took the prominent card of the individual who remained, and who followed up his victory over the retiring gentlemen, by congratulating me on my intuitive perception of the respective value of outfitters, as shewn by the selection I had just made. But indeed I had no merit therein: it was a sort of chance shot; yet he insisted that I had somehow shewn by my manner a distinct preference for him, and that the others knew it. He then proceeded to state precisely, the number of shirts and under-shirts I required.

It necessarily behoved me to give an order for five dozen of the former, and one dozen pairs of the latter, with a due proportion of stockings, flannels, camlet jackets, and mosquito protectors, which latter the

public may not be aware are a most ingenious amalgamation of the trousers and the stocking tribe. This over, I thought that our business was done, but far from it; for with a surprising degree of confidence which could be based upon nothing except a knowledge of the fact, he reminded me that I had no letter paper or braces, extra; or tooth-brushes for distant use; or razors to fall back on when my present were worn out, (although the latter had as yet had a comparatively fine time of it), or rolls of tobacco, which, independent of any taste therefore in my person, were necessary for conciliating the seamen; or bottles of rum for a similar purpose; or portable soups and essence of coffee for use in gales of wind, or anticipated shipwreck; or shoe-ribbon, or telescope, or needles and thread, or extra buttons, metal, horn, and mother-of-pearl, and a whole host of similar trifles, all of which he stated were indispensable for the voyage; indeed that no person in the rank of a gentleman could possibly expect to arrive in safety without them; and to which were added a sea-couch, a swinging cot, a wash-hand stand, and a chair; which latter was to be a perfect model of ingenuity in respect to the folding capabilities thereof. An order for these followed: but my paragon of outfitters was not to be done if possible at this stage, and he prepared to take up an entirely new ground of attack; but judiciously perceiving a change coming over my countenance, he wisely forebore operations of a *very active* nature. That young man must have been invaluable to the firm which employed him: brought up to "cuteness" from the cradle, a precociousness in the outfitting line had been thoroughly developed by constantly breathing the atmosphere of Cockayne, and in a manner such as no one could for a moment

conceive, without having a direct experience of it. It was proof against snubbing; no amount of civility could put it down, or even ameliorate it for a passing five minutes: it came on like an avalanche, and swept the milk of human kindness before it.

CHAPTER V.

MORE COUNSEL AND 'CUTENESS.

FEARFUL of such another visitation, I set out towards the city with the intention of delivering the letter of introduction to Mr. Funny's friend, and soliciting his advice as to passage, &c. I soon found myself in the presence of Mr. Hardfile, who sat in a little room, off a greater apartment, off a thoroughfare. A dingy map or two of our Indian possessions hung from the walls, and the floor was ornamented with deal packing-cases, lined with tin. All these deal cases were addressed to individuals connected with "the service,"—Generals, Captains, Lieutenants, Doctors, and Ensigns. Mr. Hardfile had a hard time of it in attending to them all no doubt; and, although apparently absorbed in business, he unhesitatingly declared himself at leisure on reading Mr. Funny's note. Indeed, he received me with great complaisance, and I felt as much at home as if I had been in the "low room" again.

Mr. Hardfile rung the bell at his right elbow, the spring of which had a No. 2 upon it, and with a speed that made me think that No. 2 must have been listening

at the key-hole, he entered, and instantly placed his services at my disposal. Then came work, indeed; No. 2, in an incredibly short space, had all the ships of the season before me, and he appeared to possess sound information upon the nature of their cargoes, and the reputation of their commanders, especially for liberality on champagne days, and their sailing qualities; and he ran over the comparative virtues of "teak-built" ships, and "river-built" ships, with an astonishing precision for a landsman.

"Let me see! 'Strathtyrum,' 780 tons; sails 1st December. No, no; that won't do: she's a beer-ship," muttered No. 2.

"That's the very craft I should like to sail in," I interrupted, for it struck me that abundance of beer was a very desirable thing in a warm latitude.

"Oh no, Sir, pray excuse me; you can never be comfortable in a beer-ship;" and No. 2 turned up his nose as significantly as if the "Strathtyrum's" cargo had been castor oil.

"But here we have the chartered ship 'Bamboozlebury,' 951 tons; teak-built, strong as wood and iron can make her; sails 21st November. Ay, this will suit you—fine solid cargo—heavy goods—carry her canvas better than the beer-ship—bad cargo, beer—tip over—Davy Jones—bottom up, and all over—Captain Bebb a splendid fellow—no end of champagne—intimate friend of Mr. Hardfile's;" and apparently considering the matter as quite satisfactorily agreed upon, No. 2 disappeared in a very business-like flash of lightning.

Mr. Hardfile, who during this discussion upon the merits of ships had been inditing a letter, asked me to excuse him for a few minutes, and before he left the room he touched the bell-spring again, but this time No. 4 vibrated, and No. 4 was sufficiently alert in his

movements to intercept my departure, for my hat was on my head and my stick in hand. No. 4, however, introduced to my notice a whitey-brown young man, of an unpleasant aspect, overdressed for noon, and this interesting youth at once proceeded to take memoranda of my bodily proportions, noting down most precisely in a neat pocket-book the result of his observations; and, whilst thus engaged, he advanced sundry objections to the provincial build of the garments which my Edinburgh artist had supplied me with; so much so, and with such ill-disguised contempt of that tradesman's abilities, that I thought proper to enquire "if they happened to be in any way connected." At this juncture the survey was completed, and this fascinating person wished me a good morning, and withdrew under the auspices of No. 4; and, sensible of having got through a large amount of business in a very short space of time, I left my compliments to Mr. Hardfile, who had not returned, and whom, indeed, I never saw again. I had, however, many interviews with Nos. 2 and 4, and on one of these occasions I found myself trying on a full-dress coatee, with medical staff buttons, under the immediate inspection and patronage of the whitey-brown agent of the army tailor, who, whilst surveying his own handiwork, declared his ability to make a handsome man out of a lamp-post for that matter; such a talent had he for building up legs, and waists, and shoulders, when need existed for a demonstration of the art, which, he averred, was rapidly assuming the position of a science.

On that same day, and in the same apartment, my eye fixed itself upon a large deal packing-case, lined with tin, the top not yet soldered down, and displaying sundry smaller tin cases, neatly japanned. The huge wooden lid was set up against the wall, as if to invite

inspection, and prove a source of gratification to myself, for on it I read, "Wilmington Walford, Esquire, M.D., Assistant-Surgeon, Bengal Army," in letters two inches long. I ought to have been gratified: indeed, "whitey-brown" asked me if I was so, for *he* would have been so under similar circumstances.

After leaving Mr. Hardfile's office, I devoted the remainder of the day to the "lions of the modern Babylon"; dined at the "Rainbow," dropped into the nearest theatre about 9 P.M., and witnessed the unbounded applause with which a pair of ankles was greeted by metropolitan connoisseurs. Vestris was in her May of popularity, and all Cockayne displayed a taste in the expression of an ankle. Soon after midnight I was at Craven Street, and sleeping with the profoundness of a hundredweight of feathers.

A month in London is not like a month spent in any other spot of mother earth—I need not describe *my* month minutely, previous to the sailing of the "Bamboozlebury." The most easily remembered feature of it was, an acute disorder in my financial department, which, in that short space, became so attenuated as to alarm me somewhat; a condition unpleasantly brought to my notice by a letter from Mr. Hardfile, in which he begged to acquaint me that I was indebted to him for military outfit, &c., in the sum of 127*l.* 13*s.* 6*d.* I had, three weeks before, paid 110*l.* for my cabin, a fortunate circumstance, and a bill of 35*l.* odd, for slop-jeans, &c.—another fortunate piece of foresight. Mr. Hardfile's letter led to the very natural process of striking a balance between the amount of his claim and the sum in hand. I went to work in real earnest, and concluded a few columns of cyphering with the very satisfactory result that Mr. Hardfile's bill was precisely 53*l.* 2*s.* 6*d.* in excess of

every fraction I was master of. My hand mechanically reached my forehead, and rested there: the next was a bitter half-hour; so bitter, that I scarcely like to record it. The star of the assistant-clerks was in the ascendant, and I could not have asked permission to pass at that moment. I put my feet on either hob of the grate, and thought of the "low room," its freedom of opinion, its energy of action, its jokes and good-fellowship, and above all, of the good old Doctor. I then looked up to the ceiling, in the vain hope of finding consolation there. The countenance of an assistant-clerk was drawn in cracks upon it, elaborately shaded by smoke, and it seemed to look down upon me, laughingly. From that instant I acquired an unmitigated disgust at the lodgings, the landlady, and the landlady's domestic; and even in this shattered state of my finances, I would willingly have stood half-a-crown for whitewash, to expunge the odious physiognomy; but the resemblance was there, even to the whiskers, in which sepia did duty for the red of the original, and I could not blot it out so long as I kept my eye upon the ceiling. Sensible of this, I recurred mentally to the scene at the theatre. Any change of thought was welcome.

To judge of this trial, let the reader ask himself if he has ever been a stranger in London, and owing something above half a hundred guineas more than he has any chance of being able to pay, and a good appointment at stake in consequence. If he has not been so, he cannot justly appreciate the feelings that were mine. A "P.S." in Mr. Hardfile's letter stated, that the "Bamboozlebury" was to be at Gravesend in forty-eight hours, and to embark her passengers at Portsmouth as soon thereafter as weather would permit. I sat all day pondering over these points, for matters were urgent. The ship might sail before the debt

was liquidated. To throw myself for a loan on Mr. Hardfile was out of that gentleman's line of business entirely. There was no time to dun my friends for a further supply—for penny postage was still in the future—and even if there had been, it went against my grain, for my original supply had been liberal. I thought of Mr. Funny—it was a funny thought; and I even included the gentleman in blue and gold who did duty for the Lord Mayor, and wondered if *he* would make a small advance upon *my affidavit* to repay it, with liberal interest for the accommodation. I winced at all these suggestions, but I debated the subject in my own mind, as if that mind had been a lawyer fee'd for thinking. I went to bed, perhaps as miserable as any sound-limbed man within the bills of mortality, not absolutely under sentence of death. The hatchet-faced countenance of Mr. Hardfile, with his bill in hand, whisked like a Jack-o'-lantern about my pillow all that night, and the shade of the bland Mr. Funny came to have a look at me, and they ultimately danced the ghost of a minuet with considerable taste and execution, after which they appeared to resolve themselves into a jury for the decision of the comparative precedence of assistant clerks and assistant surgeons, and I awaited with considerable anxiety for the result. They decided *nem. con.* in favour of the clerks, a decision which roused my ire, already somewhat excited by the idea I had nourished from time to time, that I had been imprudent in expenditure; and this rendering me desperate, I closed with the nearest juror, and with a thumb and forefinger acting like a hand-vice on some dreamy representative of a nose, I awoke.

That was only a dream: the reality of being broad

awake was quite as disagreeable, the only difference being that excitement was the predominant feature of the former, depression of the latter. A metaphorical pulling of noses is all very well to relate as a joke, but the unvarnished operation does not do in the city of London, and is by no means a fit coin in which to pay a man his bill; but it was highly requisite that something should be done, so I sallied down to the East India Docks, scarcely knowing my object for going there. The "Bamboozlebury" was still in dock. In the cuddy the chief officer was busy granting receipts for cargo: the second officer was in the hold stowing it. I had the curiosity to look into the hold; lo, six hundred tons of cast iron, and three hundred tons of fire brick! What a fine buoyant cargo! didn't I just wish that I had fixed upon the beer ship?

As I was leaving the "Bamboozlebury," Captain Bebb of that ship stepped on board. On shore he was gifted with the "*suaviter in modo*," and he showed me over the "Bamboozlebury," and we thereafter drank to each other's well-being, in sherry, at the cuddy table. But Captain Bebb had an end to serve, and that accounted for his making himself so agreeable, for which sacrifice of present enjoyment he endeavoured to make up when he found himself in "blue water." Captain Bebb skirmished round and round the point upon which he wished the conversation to turn; at last he said:—

"Dr. Walford, I have received 110*l.* for your cabin to Calcutta."

I nodded my knowledge of that circumstance.

"110*l.*, Dr. Walford, is a large sum for a young man, but a small sum for a cabin in the "Bamboozlebury." Now, as idleness is a bad thing for young men, and especially at sea, and as my surgeon has died very

suddenly this morning, suppose you take his duty to Calcutta, and I shall return you *one half* of your passage money? if not, I must advertise."

This was an unexpected hard bargain. At another time I should have made a better, but how to get over Mr. Hardfile's claim I knew not. Moreover, the Captain's argument was rendered more powerful by the bank notes being pushed over towards me. I folded them up, thrust them into my waistcoat pocket, and gave Captain Bebb a receipt. Together we drove up to the city: I stepped into Mr. Hardfile's office with my first fee in my pocket, a good one too, but to be well worked for: and then discharged my bill, for which a clerk gave me an acknowledgment. There was a curious disparity between my feelings of the morning and the afternoon. Next day, I joined the "Bamboozlebury," which had dropped down to Gravesend: a fair specimen of that class of ships then known by the term "Free Traders."

CHAPTER VI.

CATSPAWS AND GALES.

It is a fine and pleasant thing to run down Channel with an easterly wind, and equally or more pleasant running up with a westerly breeze, but not so in the inverse ratio. Whilst hammering away "close hauled," he who can bear it patiently is worthy of being canonized. The Channel is a dirty puddle in a foul wind; and the French coast a very rough nutmeg-grater to come against. Sails and provisions, passengers, crew, and clothing, are all uselessly expended, without any regard to economy; clothes are soaked and dried, again and again, and temper and mucous membranes are equally abraded. The "teak-built" ship "Bamboozlebury" realised these things; she smashed through the chopping sea like a rheumatic grampus, fully appreciating the influence which six hundred tons of cast iron, and three hundred tons of fire-brick, had on her floating qualifications, giving her such an affection for sea-bathing, that she buried herself in it. Light was only to be had in very small instalments; bedding and clothing of all kinds soon acquired a permanent dampness by no means cheering, and boots and shoes grew abundant harvests of

mushrooms and toadstools, inclusive, I think, of some very rare species.

I fancy that, hydrographically speaking, I have a tolerably correct idea of the English coast of the Channel, and for that matter also, of the French side, for at different times I have examined them to the accumulated opportunities of six weeks; but a small portion of the Anglican shore, known as "the Bill of Portland," is as well known to me as if I had surveyed it. For five successive days, this promontory was the first land seen in the morning, and the last seen at night; so much for the "windward" qualities of the good ship "Bamboozlebury."

The accommodations of an Indiaman are badly suited to the English seas in November; the cold was considerable, and although we tried to make up for it by having a temporary stove in the cuddy, which charred the bulk-heads and beams in its neighbourhood, and brought to premature life great specimens of the cockroach race, which, emancipated from their state of hybernation, crept out just to shew us what we might expect by-and-bye, there was no real general comfort derivable therefrom. Half-past seven A.M.—"seven bells" as it is called—wet decks, a westerly wind still whistling among the standing rigging; a rattling of plates, and spoons, and knives and forks, in the steerage; and a villanous odour of bilge-water pervading the "Bamboozlebury." An acute sense of hearing and smelling realised to my waking mind this condition of matters; so turning round upon my sea-couch, I was making myself as much at home as circumstances would permit, by tucking in the blankets and trusting to the steward's weakness for anticipated presents resulting in a cup of tea and a roll; when the *roll* came, and such a roll, followed by a concussion, made

the good ship "Bamboozlebury," that I was instantly shovelled into the cabin floor. Half-stunned, I thought, "that's the Bill of Portland," and in *statu quo* I rushed upon deck by the after-hatchway and up the poop ladder. The first object which met my eye was the man at the wheel, who was being carried over the side in the hitch of a rope; a mass of rigging in a state of wreck was hanging over the ship's quarter, and the shrieks of men in peril arose from under our lee. A schooner, with a foot of water already on her deck, was dragging at the Indiaman's quarter, and only kept from foundering by the larger vessel. They strained like leviathans to get asunder, and one or two more struggles effected the separation, the standing rigging snapping like packthreads, riven canvas and broken ropework sending a cloud of filmy particles to leeward; and the swell became covered with grain, the cargo of the ill-fated coaster. The "Bamboozlebury" had caught her in the attempt to take the "weather gage." It was a fearful sight: four men composing her crew sunk with her; for when the Indiaman's topsails had been thrown aback, nothing could be seen but yellow grain, contrasting with the greenish foam-besprinkled swell.

It does not always blow from the westward, and ultimately we got an easterly gale, and ran through the bay of Biscay winged with canvas. The genial latitude of Portugal warmed us into amiability; and the passengers of the "Bamboozlebury" proved themselves good sailors, for they were soon congregated round the cuddy-table to the number of thirty. Field officers, captains, and subalterns returning to duty; matrons with assortments of young ladies, and a bagfull of cadets, enthusiastically

"seeking the bubble reputation
Even in the cannon's mouth."

Among so many it was not difficult to find eccentrics; there was the lady who had made so many trips between the "Sandheads" and the "Needles," that she was quite a sailor, and sometimes talked nautically, beating the cadets easily in sea vernacular. There was the lady who collected lizards, and snakes, and beetles, spiders, cockchafers, and other creeping things. There was the Bengal civilian, who occasionally pounced out of the larboard awning cabin among the ladies assembled on the quarter-deck, oblivious that he had quite omitted completely to attire himself. There was the Honorable Captain Muttonhead, who attempted to move in an orbit of his own, and was very soon left to do so. There was the lieutenant, who being partial to music, and having no instrument, occupied unseasonable half-hours in his own cabin, by beating on the reverse of a brass wash-hand basin, an article of domestic use in India, and y'clept a "chillumchee."

But above all, there was the "Admirable Crichton" of womankind, a perfect enigma in petticoats; who for three months puzzled all hands to read her rightly. Just emerging from girlhood, most favoured in nature's fairest proportions, gifted with a mind peculiarly comprehensive and brilliant, beyond—far beyond her age and sex in conversational powers, which had been tested in the best society, and from a knowledge of which she seemed to acquire a self-confidence that would have been in another unbecoming, but which invariably sat gracefully on her. Repairing to a relative in India under the special charge of Captain Bebb (who, being blessed with a large wife and a small family, was a most unexceptionable protector), and for all that I can tell, invoiced by the first mate, she was beyond the influence of general chaperoning. Eunice, as she was universally called, was no ordinary woman. She

took by storm the hearts, not only of all the cadets, but even of the common sailors : the field officers, who might be supposed to have arrived at the years of discretion, gave in their submission to feminine supremacy like little babies ; these she led willing captives at her chariot wheels.

Her natural gifts were great and very various ; I think her knowledge of history was the most extensive I have ever seen, and as to historical dates she was an oracle. In consequence of this peculiar talent, she had an unfeminine attachment to political discussion, and very soon shewed greater knowledge of that art than the combined science in the "Bamboozlebury." She was the life of the ship, and had gained many hearts in it ; she might have gained more than one good husband had she wished, but her influence was so universal, that no one could tell for whom she had a preference ; probably for none.

As the voyage passed over, this gifted person lost her naïveté, and her power over all began to wane. A quick eye could detect her secret ; she had given her heart to the Honourable Captain Muttonhead, who happened to have none of his own. He had a head, it is true ; but there was nothing in it. That did not signify, for he had a laced jacket and a very light moustache.

I am no teller of love-stories, so I shall only refer to this from time to time ; but Eunice, the "bright Eunice," was no ordinary woman.

A sea-voyage presents the very best opportunity for moralizing, whether in a clock calm under the Line, or in the steady trade-wind, or in the tail of a hurricane. There are trifles to be culled in any of these occasions, worth picking up. Is there nothing to be gleaned from the mainmast wreck, that, water-soaked, floats deep in the water, telling thereby a lengthened period gone

astray—upon the grated top the seaweed clinging, and clusters of barnacles and other shellfish festooning it grotesquely? Perhaps some human beings clung to that spar for hours and even for days, and then dropped off one by one, until the very last, that *very* miserable man, was left to die alone, envious of the fate of those already gone. The very uncertainty of how, and where, and when, that huge spar was riven from a vessel's deck, awakens a strange curiosity: the sea birds swoop above it, now and then dipping down to purloin a barnacle, at other times to perch and hold strange conclave upon it: and thus they keep by it for months, making the wandering thing their home.

Is it all idleness to lean over the becalmed ship's side and note the merry skipjack gambol, or the blue-barred pilot fish hovering about the rudder-chains—a sure harbinger of a poaching shark, whose black fin is just above water a log-line off? Or there may be a breeze, and the barracouta, the albacore, and the pearly dolphin may race playfully with the hurrying ship, and a cloud of winged flying-fish rising from her prow may shoot gleamingly to leeward, striking a wave's side with a noise like the clicking of a thousand musket-flints.

Is there no interest in examining phosphorescent particles: in fishing up nautili and medusæ, and the many and varied sea-plants in the tract of a strong current? in meeting a ship—in watching her coming nearer and nearer: in decks thronged with heads all equally anxious; in listening to the hoarse brawling of the captain's trumpet, as he asks: "What ship is that?"—in exchanging old newspapers, well thumbed, but far from despised by the most delicate on that account; to say nothing of their having been flung on board with great rashness, guided by the ballast of a small potato; and in comparing the stranger's lati-

tude and longitude with that which we ourselves have reckoned up?

Is there nothing but discomfort in the "snoring gale," when masts bend like willow-wands, despite of hempen shrouds and backstays? Is there nothing but dread, when canvas is rent with a crash, and feathery shreds are borne in a cloud upon the leeward gust? Above all, is there no delight when nearing, after a long absence, the chalky headlands of the English coast; in passing small craft, steamers, colliers, ships of war, and "Yankee liners," most bright in excess of varnish: in being boarded by a Cowes pilot from a forty-ton cutter with an enormous "23" painted on her mainsail? Do not these make up for early squeamishness, and close cabins, and bilgewater, gales of wind and of temper, lee shores and centipedes, and many other grievances real and imaginary, but likely to occur between the Thames and the Hooghly?

We unexpectedly put into Table Bay for supplies; for the gales of the Channel had brought on an inflammatory disease among the live-stock, which broke the heart of "Jemmy Ducks," the stock man. Poor Jemmy! he watched the sheep dying off from pneumonia, and the geese and turkeys in chronic pleurisy; and he pined as they pined, and when the last bird told that "his occupation was gone," he took to his hammock and never came out again. It is not my intention to dwell upon this hasty visit to the Cape, as it was my fortune to visit it at another period. My remarks thereanent I shall therefore defer to another chapter.

Outward-bound voyages have always been celebrated for short quarrels and tetchy tempers, but most people discover that those who cannot agree at sea may be very good friends ashore. Is it sea air, that causes

this? I know not; but lucky it is that brooding strife on board, gives way to better feelings on separation; death stares men so broadly in the face with the first sight of Hindostan, that they need not court it at each other's hands; and woe is me! that one of the youths of that heavy-laden Indiaman should be placed within the last shelter its soil could give him, within twenty-four hours of first placing foot upon it!

The "Bamboozlebury" made the Coromandel coast at Porto Novo, and crept along with an easy breeze that carried land odours towards us. A full moon shewed us a palm-skirted shore. Few of the passengers could sleep that night, for friendships were about to be broken up, and quarrels had to be adjusted, for who could say when they might meet again? But there was one most unhappy, the victim of a temper which no one cared to put up with, and thus there was a cloud over him. Poor fellow! he was sadly too rash in getting into scrapes, and marvellously indiscreet in his mode of getting out of them. He was a grave lesson to the youth of the "Bamboozlebury."

About 4 P.M. of the following day, the Indiaman dropped her anchor in Madras roads among a hundred ships. The water was ruffled by the sea-breeze, the verandahed buildings of Madras looking quite Venetian, as the renowned surf of the Indian ocean sped in three successive walls of water almost to the pillars. The crossing of this surf when it is angry forms a sort of era in a life.

As, at the moment I refer to, it was comparatively amiable, I need not enlarge upon the three lunges which the masoolah-boat gave, converting ladies and gentlemen into one homogeneous mass of neutral vitality for the time being. That was a mere trifle compared with our embarkation ten days thereafter,

when the surf was in a more surly mood. Who-o-o-o! isn't that the thing to try the nerves? Catamarans and sharks hovering about to pick you up! A friend was with me, who in his early days had been in the cockpit of an English frigate when she lowered her jack to the "stripes and stars" of the new republic. I watched *him*, and there was no laughing in *his* countenance, and yet he was a most merry fellow in general, and was very far from being a white feather. As we got fairly to windward of the seaward surf, he drew a long breath and said:

"It reminds me of the Irishman driving along the ravine side 'widout a linchpin.'"

On gaining the sand beyond reach of the surf, we were hastily shovelled out of the boat, and on shaking ourselves into footing, most of us looked back to the "Bamboozlebury," and wished we might be as happy on shore as we had been in her; for here we scattered into groups—the old hands to friends' hospitable boards, the younger to the Fort St. George.

But I get on too fast. I forgot to say how Fort St. George looked from the sea, with its emblem of England, after five months upon the ocean in *our* very slow coach. How every eye strained when land was first sung-out from the main-topsail-yard; and when the sandy, cocoa-fringed beach brought ideas uppermost of a character not particularly cheering. Psha! give care to the winds, and laugh with those cadets; poor boys! how many of them will be laughing this time next year? Where are these young ladies running, helter-skelter, tumble-rumble, down the after-hatchway? Two dripping sons of the coast have mounted the lofty side of the "Bamboozlebury" from a catamaran, and their poverty of wardrobe jars upon the feelings of Englishwomen.

Spirits ran high that night at the dinner-table in the "cadets' quarters." Iced claret was plentiful, and something even stronger than iced claret must have been there, or perhaps the sudden change to land had proved too stimulating. It must have been the land, it could not be the claret, for it never is so on such occasions; and now that I think of it, I remember a friend who never kept sober after eating salmon. A sprinkling of seniors on leave at the Presidency added to the party. They were at home, and not so noisy. At length, when bantering, and badinage, and revelry filled the spacious hall, they were suddenly put a stop to by the ominous words, "You lie!"

We looked aghast. We knew what these words foreboded, and therefore you might have heard a pin drop—yet no breach of the peace occurred; the party broke up in perfect silence; and whatever amount of wine had been drunk, no reeling step hurried from that room; each sought his private apartment as best he might. The odious term had been recklessly cast at a noted duellist, who could split a leaden bullet on the edge of a penknife-blade, and whilst others were dispersing, this man continued to sip his wine: it was a trifle to *him*—he could soon settle that by taking away a life he could not give again.

I slept most uneasily; with many futile attempts to capture a mosquito that had got under the netting, for I had clumsily got under it myself. One of these thin-legged gentry in grey pantaloons drummed perseveringly at my ear on a tiny brass drum, only leaving off to poke his proboscis under the cuticle. It is a nice art that of getting cleverly under a mosquito net. Captain Basil Hall describes it graphically; I think I must have slept in the same bed that he slept in, for I realized every one of his sufferings. From a fitful

slumber which at length came over me I was disturbed by a fellow passenger.

"Arise, Walford! and bring your instruments." I hurried on my garments, and searched hastily in a bullock trunk, and taking therefrom a pair of forceps, a tourniquet, a roll of bandage and a probe, I followed him to the beach, the sentry letting us pass on giving the parole. As we gained the beach the morning gun announced the dawn from one of the bastions, and a gradually increasing ring of smoke travelled with a double motion far out to sea ere it faded.

"Mr. Blunt!" said I, addressing our lately fellow-passenger, whom we now joined, "you will apologise to the officer to whom you applied such objectionable terms? you cannot but regret them."

Mr. Blunt made no reply, but his second, turning round, said: "It is impossible, no apology will be accepted: I have hinted that already."

The opposing parties met a little further on, and going up to the insulted man, I said:

"Captain J—— it is my province to save life, not to take it away, if possible; but I would also save you bitter regrets which even a seared conscience cannot always hide. It is said that you are skilled in matters such as this, and this hot-headed youth is very ignorant of them. I speak in the capacity of a non-combatant, who intends to do his best for whosoever may happen to fall."

The cool man turned towards his second somewhat scornfully, and made no reply. It is a great consolation to think that I did my best to bring about peace. I retired up the beach, displaying no doubt much more agitation than any of those more nearly concerned, and took my station removed from all view of the coming scene.—Gayleard! thou good-hearted, where art thou?

In a few minutes the shots were faintly heard above the surf as it broke on the sea-beach, and instantly returning to the ground, I thought at first that I had done so prematurely. The cadet was on his knees, as if in prayer, and so he remained; he had so fallen. His second even thought him praying—but he was dead, stone-dead. A small purple speck no bigger than a pea, and a drop or two of venous blood upon his forehead, told where the bullet had entered. His second and I bore him to the fort gate, where he was taken up by others; and we then proceeded to report.

The necessary investigation into this sad affair, detained me at Madras for a month. The “Bamboozlebury” left me behind, and I ultimately took my passage to Calcutta in another ship. In due time I found myself in the Hooghly, and brought up within a cable’s length of a homeward-bound East Indiaman. I went on board with letters, for these were not the days of “overland mails.” It was pleasant to see so many faces joyfully anticipating a return to their native land. Some thirty children, of English parents, gambolled about the capstan cheerily, and even the field-officer retiring to spend the few years remaining to him among the scenes of early days, looked gladsome. But the sky of anticipation was not *all* sunny over the homeward bound; for there was the widow who was leaving the grave of her husband in Hindostan; there was the orphan child repairing to the protection of friends whom it had never seen and never known; there was the invalid youth whose health had given way in a single season, hastening homewards to recruit.

Calcutta, in certain seasons, is a most busy place; for there are frequent arrivals from England, and hosts of men on furlough, waiting to embark. The Hooghly is full of ships; hospitable mansions are full of guests.

Now, however, numerous hotels exist, and the spirit of hospitality has sickened and died out. Passengers are looking out for cabins; and captains of ships are looking out for passengers. I was somewhat late in the season for the thick of this fair; I came in for the fag-end of it. I put up at a boarding-house for the first week, and at the "table d'hôte," yellow was the prevailing complexion; and where it was not, ghastly, transparent, anasaruous white, marked the universal deficiency of red blood-corpuscles. Having taken a seat next to a subaltern officer in a rifle-green jacket, he informed me that he was awaiting the departure of a ship in which he had taken his passage to England. From his appearance I thought he might be improved by the trip, assisted by a liberal supply of mineral waters on his arrival; so I recommended them to his notice, and he said he would not forget them. Deficient appetite was not amongst his ailments; for he broke six eggs consecutively on the summit of a little mountain of rice, powdered the whole with cayenne, and disposed of it very rapidly. This he did, not by distributing to others, but by stowing it away in his own private cellar, and with almost inconceivable dispatch. Having thus committed a seeming matutinal debauch for a sick man, he nevertheless served a pound of flat-fish in much the same manner. At this point, he commenced what is usually termed "breakfast" in England; tea, toast, and raspberry jam. I hinted that he had better be off to sea expeditiously. He looked me in the face doubtfully; but I was sincere; a lieutenant's pay and allowances could not uphold such a commissariat as he required.

CHAPTER VII.

RAWNESS AND REDCOATS.

AFTER reporting my arrival at the Town-Major's and Adjutant-General's departments, I was duly appointed, in the following day's "General Orders," to do duty at the General Hospital, a gigantic edifice, upon a plain between the Hooghly and the European portion of Calcutta. During my residence there, I had many opportunities of studying human nature, as it is within the "Mahratta ditch," and within which ditch, it is said, that the inhabitants have many attributes peculiar to the locality.

I found myself the tenant of a room, having a verandah on one side, that is, on the side meant to represent the "sunny side," for so the hospital serjeant expressed it; but the term carried no cheerful sentiment along with it, for every side looked *over* sunny. I crossed to the other side, where were two windows without a verandah. I expected it to look quite dull there, and to have an air of coolness about it, and without much thought I put my uncapped head out. A sun's ray flashed through it; I drew it in again hastily, and took

the hint. The hospital serjeant sneered at my greenhornishness. All day I felt the potency of *that* tap: it had a tropicality about it not very cheering to a fresh man, and he a doctor. I mentioned the circumstance to the medical officer in charge of the hospital, at whose quarters, in a wing of the building, I dined that evening, who remarked:

“Leeches to the temples and twenty grains of calomel at bed-time; or you are no better than a dead man.”

But I had already been attentive to claret and Hodgson's pale ale; and my host assured me, from the host's seat of his own table, that these were rank poisons, and only before us as a signal of hospitality. He never drank either of them himself, but kept them for his friends. I believed him; for he looked as if “leeches and twenty grains of calomel” were his daily food. He declared however that years of experience had taught him that claret and pale ale were universally productive of engorgement of the vital organs, and the root of all physical evil in tropical climes.

“Just take a peep at poor O'Brien, your immediate senior: he is a victim of the incautiousness of a new comer. He drank a whole bottle of pale ale every day for the first week after his arrival; and what was the consequence? Fever, dysentery, and cholera—all in succession. Bleeding, salivation, leeches and opium, blisters, colocynth and croton oil—whew! just look at him!”

The hospital surgeon was such a very wet blanket, that I became sensible of a feeling of depression, and at nine P.M. I left his Indian “mahogany.” But before entering my own quarters, which had during the day been supplied with certain articles of furniture, I asked for Mr. O'Brien's room, and was ushered into his presence unceremoniously. An emaciated young man

was stretched upon a canework "stretcher," which was surrounded by a mosquito net, supported by four slender rods; it looked like a wire-gauze dish-cover to keep the flies off. He had arrived three months before, when cholera was epidemic. The disease laid its gaunt hand on him, and its violet hue spread over him, and he saw what it meant, although few do. But he did not die then; that was to come. A regiment just arrived from England buried trenchfuls of recruits; the seamen of the shipping passed away from their busy calling rapidly. Death stalked wildly abroad, and laughed at all the doctoring. He ruled as a king during *that* time; he provided the young recruits and the careless seamen with dainties; he gave them plantains, and cucumbers, and melons, and cocoa-nuts, for their morning meal; and toddy from the palm tree, and fiery arrack for their evening refreshment; and towards dawn, Death whispered into the ear of the drunken man:—

Sleep! for the morn is breaking,
And reckless eve is past,
The longest and the last,
The sleep that knows no waking.

Mr. O'Brien's room was furnished after the hospital serjeant's best notions for promoting the comfort and supporting the dignity of the junior medical officer. A teak-wood square camp-table, which appeared to be all legs and brass hinges, curiously and ingeniously constructed for folding into a small space, occupied the centre; and being only three feet square at the most, it was scarcely visible in a thirty feet apartment. Heaped up in a corner was a heterogeneous mass of crockery, of blue; tea-cups, hotwater-plates, and "sneakers," exact duplicates of those provided by

the same purveyor for him who had occupied the quarter previously. The camp bed, on which the sick man lay, appeared, though new, to be rickety and unsteady, and barely wide enough for comfort. It was probably an invention specially intended for slender or emaciated individuals. The patient seemed to read my thoughts, for as I scanned these surrounding features, he, with a smile approaching to ghastly, remarked :

“These are the luxuries of the East, as I have realized them.”

Within a week, I was one of a few (*a very few*) who followed poor O'Brien to the grave-yard ; a cemetery surrounded by sombre cypress trees of unwonted growth. White tombstones, but lately erected, shone vulgarly among those chastened by a season's rains ; and others blacker still, from a clothing of moss plants or fungi. The freshly cut tablets formed an unmistakeable register of deaths during the late epidemic. I looked into the newly made-grave ; it was very deep, and more than a foot of water had collected in it already. The coffin splashed in the water on being lowered, and then all retired hastily, for no one, not even a doctor, hangs heedlessly over an open grave in Calcutta.

On entering my own apartment I found its domestic arrangements exactly to resemble those of Mr. O'Brien. I shall not recapitulate, but I sat downcast that evening ; I had got my first step up the ladder of promotion, and had two hundred and twenty-eight before me, before I could legally increase the size of bullion on my epaulettes. Reclining on my cane-stretcher, it creaked as I turned, and conveyed no feeling of stability to my position in *esse* or my prospects in *posse*. A few frogs, of various sizes, hopped about a damp corner of my

room, near one of the windows, that was marked off by a brickwork ledge, three inches high—to do duty as a bath-room. The frogs were by no means alarmed at my presence: they were quite at home, although the apartment was on the second story. A bat, of larger breed than I had hitherto been accustomed to, gyrated about the room noiselessly, somewhat confused by the light upon the table. There was too much light for him, and too little light for me; we were both puzzled in consequence, and he now and then tipped with his silent wing the glass shade upon the oil-burner, making a tiny bell-like sound, singularly clear, which sent miniature echoes towards the rafters, among which they seemed to struggle and become confused. I noted these trifles more strictly than another might have done: they did not appear to be such trifles, and if they were, they, for the time, put on a little mask of importance. A clear sound of a “clucking” character came from the doorway; it passed steadily round the apartment, and close to the wall, where objects of small size could not easily be seen. The sound was more distinct as it passed the stretcher on which I lay, for it was near the side-wall, and little feet became audible. I cried out “hush!” as they passed; the little feet betrayed evidence of consternation, and an overpowering odour of musk, but of a very coarse quality, pervaded the apartment. It was a musk rat. I took good care never to alarm a musk rat again, for that little fellow damaged my whole wine-cellar.

At daybreak, which occurred about five A.M., the morning gun from the bastions of Fort William suddenly awoke me. All the “animated nature” of Calcutta seemed promptly roused by that wonted summons; crows, and minas, and jays, obeyed it, and began

a-cawing. They knew that call better than the domestics, who had slept all night within call in the verandah; for these set about their morning task less willingly than the crows and minas. My "bearer" or body-servant approached me, pointed to the bathing corner, which I stepped within, and then canted several earthen pots of water in succession over me. I had that morning a vicarious toilet: the "bearer" would not allow his prerogative to be encroached upon, so I submitted.

On descending towards the "compound" or courtyard, with the intention of visiting the hospital wards, I found the sun above the horizon: my host of the previous evening was just passing, bent on the same object. The ground to be gone over did not amount to fifty steps, nevertheless a native held a chatta or palm-leaf umbrella over his head. As we ascended the ample staircase to the wards, he suddenly stopped, for a stream of light found its way through a chink in the venetian blind of the staircase window. It was only a thread of light, but in mine host's eyes it obstructed the way as effectually as if it had been "a long twenty-four." He declined passing, and I suggested the use of the umbrella. But the attendants soon closed up the offending chink with a piece of cotton no bigger than a hazel nut, and we proceeded to the sick beds, attended by a dozen of subordinates of Anglo-Indian blood.

Energetic treatment was the distinguishing feature of the hospital; disease ran its course too rapidly to waste time in waiting for the action of ordinary medicaments. Pills like petards; boluses like bombshells. To gain the scale of Indian doses capable of meeting Indian ailments successfully, I multiplied my own scale

by three, and found a near approximation to it. I had some grave thoughts over my solitary breakfast-table upon what I had seen. I felt half inclined to think there must be a mistake somewhere in medicine; but where?—that was the point. I could not trace it—but the convalescents looked like reanimated corpses.

I spent the early part of that day in letter-writing, and at 2 P.M. bethought me of leaving my card at Government House. My “sirdar-bearer” gave a signal from the verandah, and in an instant a hired palanquin was at my service. On sending in my card to the aide-de-camp in waiting, I was ushered into an ante-room; the aide-de-camp entered in shirt sleeves, and with a billiard-cue in his hand. I had come an hour too late, “tiffin” or luncheon was over, and those aides-de-camp who had not gone to sleep had gone to billiards. Had I called at noon we should have been on ceremony; as it was, we were quite at home. In so far as I was concerned it answered better as it was; I had no objection to shirt sleeves, so long as they were as clean as those of the aide-de-camp. I had learnt something however, namely, the hour when visitors ought to call; and, sensible of my “snobbery,” I had wit enough left in me to perceive that I ought not to detain him. But to prove his good breeding, he asked with an air of much interest about the “Bamboozebury,” more especially inquiring for the lady passengers, and one beyond the others, Eunice. He had already heard of her. Having apparently satisfied him on these points, he put my name down in the visitors’ book, and accompanied me to the doorway.

In the evening I seated myself upon the flat roof of the assistant-surgeons’ quarters, a building which for

insalubrity and melancholy aspect is not surpassed by any at the Presidency. The young medico who escapes fever during his probation there may be looked upon as a rarity. As I gazed into the court below, the convalescents, in chintz morning gowns, as pale from frequent washing as their faces were pallid from physic and disease, sauntered about, parodies upon the stalwart soldier. None of them seemed ready to seek "reputation in the cannon's mouth," but many played the "slipperd pantaloon" all over, for not a shank among them kept up a stocking. The sight was calculated to depress—disease and shortened life came uppermost in my thoughts. I turned round, that a change of prospect might dissipate these; my eye fixed upon the European debtors' prison close by, and at that moment a lady, in all the finery of Calcutta fashion, was tripping gaily from the doorway to her carriage, having concluded a hasty visit to her husband, who lived snugly in the Calcutta "stone jug," allowing his wife two hundred rupees monthly for pin-money. Off drove the beautiful britzka towards the evening promenade: that lady roused in me graver thoughts than did the slipshod convalescents. I sought another object, and found one in Government House. Two adjutant-birds were perched upon the arms of England; they were tugging vigorously for the possession of a bone;—a metempsychotic idea struck me, that a defunct Great Mogul and a Governor-General might again be fighting for a bone which they had fought for seventy years ago. All the prominent buildings in the same quarter were favorite resorts or roosting-places for this strange bird. According to the importance of the pile, so was it patronised; most of them were stationary; a few, however, were in motion, picking their steps sedately,

like a dandy of Regent-street in a sloppy thoroughfare. The sedentary birds chiefly engaged my attention: their bald heads and pendulous beard-like pouches added much to their patriarchal air. Among them I thought I could discover classes or orders varying in consequence. Three old birds occupied one end of the long building on the left of the viceregal palace—a single bird was perched upon the other; the Supreme Court was tenanted by three, a number singularly coinciding with the Senators of the College of Justice. I became fond of noting the habits of these birds: they evidently preferred roosting on the buildings of greatest importance. Government House was therefore specially honoured; the arms of England blazoned on the wings, and the lions on the four gateways, had each its occupant; and one old bird, in virtue of years, impudently arrogated to himself the nightly privilege of roosting on the tip of the unicorn's horn.

A few days after these incidents, a card signed by an aide-de-camp requested my company at his Excellency's table at 7 P.M on a certain day. I did not fail to attend. The drawing-room was gaily filled before I arrived. The aide-de-camp received me, and a few minutes afterwards a gentleman in plain clothes crossed from the other side of the apartment and entered into easy conversation with me. He seemed to know me for a new arrival, and even addressed me by name. I was not certain, but I thought he looked rather quizzically at my costume. I afterwards found out that a sling-belt was not usually worn on such occasions, and mine was accidentally put on outside the coatee, instead of inside. Just as dinner was announced, *the* aide-de-camp introduced me to the nearest lady; I offered her my arm,

and passed with the "glittering throng" into a dining hall with no end of pillars.

My lady friend was the wife of an ensign of forty-five years, who had just joined a regiment in Fort William after a half-pay rustication of a quarter of a century. He was once more a full-blown ensign; Major S., the aide-de-camp, might have been his son. The ensign's lady rattled away as glibly as if the ensign had been a major-general; but the ensign himself, poor fellow! knew wherein the difference lay.

I was rather taken by surprise to find that the affable gentleman before alluded to took the centre of the table, or the host's seat at great boards. The Governor-General of India was in the capacity of a private gentleman, and acting the hospitable host with the most perfect success; and, not very late in the day, he did me the honour to drink wine with me, for I was there for the first time. As we concluded this courtesy, the ensign's lady whispered rather too loudly, that his Excellency's bottle was one of special flavour. It never left his elbow, and was dressed in a little jacket, or rather petticoat, of light blue with a flounce of deeper shade of the same colour: all the other bottles were rigged out in white and scarlet. The horrors of "blackbottleism" are thus got rid of in Calcutta, where decanters are seldom used. The remark of the ensign's lady did not pass unheeded. I think his Excellency must have heard it, for the portly "kansamah," or butler, standing by the side of his chair, took the "blue bottle" in hand, and, coming up to the ensign's lady's elbow, and filling up her glass, he intimated that his Excellency requested the honour of drinking wine with her. The ceremony duly concluded, I threw a fraction of a glance

at the ensign's lady; she appeared to be laughing on one side of the face and crying on the other. After matters had settled down, and contrary to all etiquette, I, as if by accident, put the lady's glass instead of my own, to my lips;—it was remarkably good toast-and-water cooled down to 80°. The substitution did not pass unnoticed by the ensign's lady, for she blushed a second time; I begged pardon for my rudeness. His Excellency's bottle did not prove so exhilarating as our own had been, for the ensign's lady spoke very little after that; and when we repaired to the ball-room—for a ball was to follow—I could not but observe the change that had come o'er the "spirit of her dream." And now a blaze of light was around the noble edifice; crowds of vehicles were about the gateways and in front of the steps, and from the columned verandah of the great hall I observed numerous gay uniforms hurrying up the steps, interspersed with ladies, whose jewels sparkled like fireflies among their muslined folds. The ball-room filled rapidly. Tastelessly gilded "punkas," or swinging frames suspended from the ceilings, were kept constantly in motion by pullers in adjoining apartments, and thus the stagnant air was roused, and rendered better fitted for the support of life. The motion of these would have been pleasant to the eye, as well as to the sense of feeling, had it been in unison; but each puller kept his own time, and a fine churning they made of it. I was reminded of a clockmaker's shop, in which pendulums of different sizes and at variance in their beat, create similar impressions on the sensorium.

I passed along, and quickly found friends to converse with, for groups here and there were perfectly at home. Any little air of ceremony was confined to the immediate

neighbourhood of his Excellency, who now appeared in the blue and gold of a diplomatic costume. Perfectly got up ladies, assuming the term "charming," had coteries of admirers; and those to whom "passée" applied distinctly, half-willingly chaperoned newly-arrived daughters, who had just entered the matrimonial market. Mammas acted over again the parts of titled dowagers; faded civilians and field-officers did duty for titled suitors and heirs-apparent; captains and sub-alterns were the younger sons, and like them were used to snubbing, and got snubbed accordingly, and all as it should be. I was astonished to see the romance of youth verdant in gentlemen above fifty. I corroborated this peculiarity in Indian gentlemen, which I had heard of. It was not, therefore, the fact, but the extent or degree of it which excited surprise. If a newly arrived fair daughter became rebellious to maternal injunction, and so forgot her duty to herself and to her family as to engage herself for a fifteenth waltz out of the "civil" line of business, and to a youth of forty, an age at which romance is only budding in the East, and may only reach its zenith with gray hairs, the lapse was only waived in case of a scarlet-trousered hussar with a "handle to his name," a single-breasted aide-de-camp, or a man rejoicing in the lace and allowances of the general staff. Regimental men never let their eyes light upon white muslin; an impression was becoming general that to do so might induce amaurosis. Such unfortunates, therefore, sat in groups, or singly skirmished about the frontier-rooms for glasses of iced negus and pink champagne. Young artillerymen from Dum-Dum, and infantry officers from Fort William and Barrackpore, dotted the hall and lounged behind pillars. One could

pick out the brevet captains by an air of tarnish upon their lace, nor did their cloth look so bright as that of others, for it shewed a tendency to take on a purple tinge; this is a peculiarity of brevet rank attained by a subaltern, and is perhaps expressive of "hope deferred" which "maketh the heart sick," and two hundred and eighty rupees monthly; at least I never could account for it in any other way. It was on this evening that I drew the inference for the first time, and there is some truth in it—I have traced the principle for many years.

"Allow me the honour of introducing to Mrs. Chappelmount, Mr. Jocelyn Scragge, of the Civil Service," said a staff-officer to a lady of magnificent attainments in respect to general outfit; producing at the same time a very stunted gentleman, in black coat and white moustache, whom I certainly would have taken for a hussar in mufti; but I afterwards learnt that the moustache is, in India, characteristic of the non-combatant branch of the public service. Mr. Scragge bore no further approximation to military beyond the hirsute distinctive alluded to. Pinched in proportions, and pinched by the prevailing fashion of the day relative to dress-coats and continuations, he appeared to have been kept forcibly by fashion in his present state of development, or to have suddenly left off growing at a moment's notice, and never again to have resumed it. Mr. Jocelyn Scragge being an enthusiastic lady's man, his time and purse were ever at the service of the fair sex. Mrs. Chappelmount was a "fine woman," most particularly so when she sat in that ball-room, in black velvet and Brussels lace. She would likewise have been a "fine woman" had it been her fortune in life to have handed pots of porter,

and measures of brandy, and slices of lemon, over the bar of an English tavern. But Mrs. Chappelmount happened to be niece of an English earl; and, mindful of this, took pleasure in sayings which ladies of less importance could not or would not say. She prided herself upon this assumed license; it was *her* prerogative.

Mr. Scragge, having been overcome by the fascination of Mrs. Chappelmount, whom he now saw for the first time, stood before this Juno of the festival so overpowered with admiration, that he was not quite certain whether he stood upon his head or his heels. Mrs. Chappelmount, directed by the formality of introduction, eyed him from his moustache downwards, until, having apparently arrived at his knees, Mrs. Chappelmount stopped, with ill-disguised wonder, to assure herself that she had not been mistaken.

“Mr. Jocelyn Scragge,” replied the lady, “I have much pleasure in making your acquaintance, for I cannot but congratulate myself on the lucky chance which has thrown me into the society of such an intrepid hero.”

Mr. Jocelyn Scragge almost lost himself at this moment; he had never been in a situation wherein his wits were more inclined to go a-wool-gathering; and perhaps ideas of a Platonic regard for the lady had secured some of his senses. It was only the misapplication of the word “intrepid” which prevented him from making a fool of himself. But the term he recognized as one not strictly in conformity with the Bengal Civil Service claims. A misty idea was coming over him that the lady was jocosely alluding to his moustache; and then the happy thought occurred, that she had heard how he had on one occasion gallantly

volunteered at the storming of a mud fort. He thought it noble, however, to disclaim any military merit he might have in virtue of that circumstance, and hastened to correct the lady's impression by stating, that although on one occasion of importance he had volunteered for service, he had no claim to military distinction.

"You mistake me," said the magnificent Mrs. Chappelmount, as poor Scragge concluded his speech; "you mistake me entirely: your claim to intrepidity is perfectly legitimate notwithstanding; for any man (and Mrs. Chappelmount again directed her gaze to Mr. Scragge's lower extremities) who has the courage to venture so far from home on such a pair of ——"

Here I felt sensible of being rather too near the speakers, with none of whom I was personally acquainted; and, fearful of being thought an eaves-dropper, I sauntered towards the verandah, nor did I again observe Mr. Scragge. Whether that gentleman had sunk through the floor, I know not; but Mrs. Chappelmount's cruelty was noised abroad.

Notwithstanding this little trait of a "fine woman," I could not deny that the sight before me was very imposing; the music splendid; the dancing unexceptionable. I passed along to a crowded part of the hall; there were many eyes turned towards the dancers. One youthful pair especially drew attention. The lady was a lovely creature; she looked as if she could be proud—she was not so then—she suppressed it. It was Eunice; she was waltzing mazily, supported by the arm of the Honourable Captain Muttonhead. Her eye caught mine as she passed; I bowed somewhat with reserve, and she turned away hastily—the

“medical staff” paled before the trappings of the lancer. Again they set off in the waltz: for the lady it was a superfluous gyration, her head was sufficiently turned already. I thought I saw a blush upon her countenance; but I was mistaken, it was only reflected from the scarlet jacket of her partner, who danced most marvellously, considering he had spurs on; and he said, in a not inaudible tone:

“Pwon my vewacity, Weunice! pway who is your fwend of the winfantwy?”

I had no heart for this gaiety. A lively subaltern said it was dull work; and expressed a wish that he had rather gone to the “Kidderpore hop.” I soon discovered that he alluded to a seminary for orphan young ladies, daughters of officers; and that several invitations from the lady superintendent were in various youthful pockets around me: but a pair of epaulettes was an invitation in general. Stealing away from the viceregal ball, we transferred ourselves, in half an hour, to a festivity having more of the “otium” and less of the “dignitate.”

After an introduction to the lady superintendent, who looked rather steamy, and duly apologizing for intrusion, we had to make as much of a corner or a doorway as we possibly could. Innumerable young ladies, in white muslin dresses and blue sashes, formed the ground-work; and dark blue coats and jackets, here and there varied by a black coat, or a scarlet shell, with the slightest inclination to that condition of the Saxony fabric vulgarly expressed by the term “seedy,” did duty for a pattern. Neither ground nor pattern were steady, however, but moved continually about, and frequently in jerks, *saltatim*, as it were,

like the bugles, beads, and other glassy fragments in that deceiver of the optics, the kaleidoscope. The blue coats and jackets had anchors and rampant lions on their buttons, demonstrative of the owner's position in the pilot service, and the "Honourable Company's mercantile marine." A few, however, had anchors *only*, and these were warrant-officers and midshipmen, from a frigate reported as lying at Diamond Harbour.

Dancing was no see-saw affair on this occasion:—down the middle and up again—mazurkas at one end, and "double shuffle" at the other, were only eclipsed by the grosses of glasses of lemonade and "sherry-cobbler," which appeared at the conclusion of every dance, and disappeared before another could be formed, which was only two minutes and a half on an average; for so a sallow gentleman, with a stop-watch, informed me.

A blue sash next me, of sixteen tropical summers, to whom I addressed myself, brought on an intense fit of jealousy in an anchor button (who had, as he said, "taken up a berth for the evening" on her "weather side"), by inadvertently expressing great admiration for the button device of the medical staff, and the splendour of the epaulettes. The anchor-button looked very yellow; he became jaundiced on the instant. A waltz struck up (it was the "Rosa"), and I bore off my prize from under the guns of the anchor-button. Waltzing, at 85° out of doors and 105° within, half way up to the point at which water boils! and no one caring a thistledown for Fahrenheit, and quite as little for Reaumur! Dozens of couples were on the floor in no time, most of whom were very ill-paired as to stepping. Many anchor-buttons expressed opinions,

that they were limited in "sea-room;" and their navigation and seamanship being for once at fault, frequent collisions were the unavoidable consequence. But these opinions being at length expressed in language having a tendency to become too forcible, and learning from this that a feeling detrimental to the scarlet cloth more or less pervaded the "hearts of British oak," who considered the former as having intrusively disturbed the harmony or coup-d'œil of the assembly taken as a whole, the red coats one by one made their congés to the lady superintendant and retired, leaving the field undisturbed to the "true blue." It was a masterly retreat, a perfect Corunna in its way; for no one had committed himself—"the red" and "the blue" had both come out of the ordeal scathless.

Seizing one of some dozens of palanquins waiting within the quadrangle, I urged the bearers to take me to my quarters; but they were all engaged. The moon, however, was in the sky, and I thought it no great hardship to put my lower limbs to the undignified duty of locomotion. I took the road towards the Mall, instead of turning to the right and across the esplanade. The morning was so clear in its moonlight, and the river glistened in it so, that I missed the uninteresting turn towards the hospital, and continued on under the fortress embrasures. As I skirted the river, its bank became crowded with budgerows, beaulios, and other passenger craft, the stems of which were moored to the bank, and of these, one was already moving from among the others. The early hour for such a starting drew my attention, the more so as two empty palanquins were by the roadside, and their bearers squatted around smoking. Impulsively

I sprang upon the deck of a budgerow; the other pushed astern. An officer, in ball costume, was occupying the doorway; and a white satin dress was visible at an open jalousie. It was Eunice—poor Eunice!

CHAPTER VIII.

WANDERINGS AND WEDDINGS.

THE budgerow moved slowly up the river with the tide ; it had a sombre pace and a solemn aspect—the white satin dress was there ; and with as solemn a stride I struck across the esplanade by the eastern gate of Fort William, and was soon upon my pallet of hard cocoa-nut fibre.

The daily newspaper of next morning was upon my breakfast table, and glancing at the “general orders by the Commmander-in-Chief,” I caught my own name as appointed to do duty with a battalion at a station some three hundred miles up the country, and to proceed by water. In those days steamers’ paddles had not as yet stirred the waters of the Ganges, and the usual mode of travel was by budgerow, which, between sailing and towing, might average a daily advance of fifteen miles. But this order could not have come more welcome, for a vague idea of following Eunice arose in my mind. In another hour I was at the ghaut, and had engaged a budgerow, and advanced

one-half of the hire. The forenoon I spent in the bazaar, laying in stores of pale ale, tea, wine, and brandy ; and, after a wonderfully active twelve hours, I found all my preparations made, and at dawn of the following morning, just twenty-six hours from the time I had seen the budgerow of Captain Muttonhead cast off, I found the tide taking me, at a moderate pace, through the shipping of the Hooghly. As the tide was feeble against the freshes in the river in August, I almost thought I should overtake them, but why I should think of doing so I could not tell, for what was Eunice to me ? I had never entertained for her the most distant approach to love. I knew one who did however, and he was my friend—but the desire to follow that boat increased upon me.

The wind freshened a little and aided the tide ; we soon passed little temples, white and shining, and full of pinnacles ; and ghauts crowded with bathers, some of whom, waist-high in the stream, went through formal ablutions, casting, as they did so, handfuls of flowers upon the waters ; then hamlets bathed in trees, and then a military cantonment. Innumerable boats with ragged sails were creeping up the Hooghly, side by side with us, bent on a six months' inland voyage. Carrion kites sailed over head, and the adjutant-bird, like a mote between us and the sun, gyrated in a cooler region, far up in the sky. I had watched all day for the budgerow which had preceded me, and as we brought up at evening at a village ghaut, I looked for it as if it might be there—there, however, it was not.

But for a weight upon my breast I should have enjoyed this village scene. The matted walls and roofs of huts were variegated with the broad leaves and yellow flowers of creeping esculents ; to which elephantine convolvuli clung for support, as if in virtue of a kindred nature.

A little Hindoo boy drove a herd of mouse-coloured cattle into the stream, which having divided a little further down, had now become narrowed. The cattle swam across, as if accustomed to the task, and the youthful herdsman followed, holding on by the caudine member of the very last. Anon a village girl, with tinkling bells on her small ankles, and earthen jar upon her head, tripped coyly to the ghaut, and drew her muslin scarf more closely around her.

Monotonous days passed over ; villages were no more seen. Miles of sand glared upon the sight ; long tracts of grass, in which human beings might easily lose themselves, became wearisome. A brace of wild ducks would pass over head, and No. 3 was sure to bring them down ; or creeping close to a jutting point, the snubnosed alligator lurked behind it, for it looks ready. The boat steals round the point—there is the gnarled trunk of a fallen tree there—and yet it moves. With his mail all mud-clad and dried by the sun, his piercing eye just above the level of the water, his snout within it, his scaly longitude coiled zigzag upon the sedgy slope, he launches himself just as an ounce ball reaches him where the scales seem thinnest behind the shoulder. He rears himself as he struggles towards the water, and six yards of scaly length uncoil themselves with a rattling noise as he gains his own element, and the oily eddy, here and there bloodstained, which swirls above his back, points out the course he has taken. By that he can be traced, close by yon rotten tree, the leafless branches of which break the surface of the water, and give footing to a spotted kingfisher.

It was the fourth night, and we brought up at a solitary place ; there was no village with twinkling lights and sleep-disturbing tom-toms, or drumming.

The boatmen's cooking-fires blazed up, however, and odours of savoury curries perfumed the air; these in their turn died out. The boatmen prepared for rest by an ablution, and crept under the sail upon deck, for there were no village revelries near to make them break forth in mutterings. As the fires sank, the brake was lit up by myriads of fireflies, whose tiny lights ebbed and flowed among the dark green, at times a sparkling shower, a wondrous pyrotechny. The cricket's whirring noise, blended with the beetle's hum, sung us all to sleep, to be roused by a cribbing jackal, which, skulking within a few paces, shrieked the longest bar of discord I ever heard, and broke the stern silence of the jungle night.

Another day, and the waste gave place to a great city, and the mingled noises of men. Artizans in ivory came down to the ghauts and offered their wares for sale; dealers in silks and bandannahs hovered about patiently, for time is not much heeded in their eyes; cunning in trade and circumventive in a bargain being equivalent to the European's "small profits and quick returns." Then a blue line of wavy hills formed a pleasant background, only at intervals seen as we issued from bamboo thickets, but we crept towards them perseveringly, and left the busy city in our wake. Before we did so I made inquiries for *the* budgerow: it had been seen, but was gone again; gone again!

The blue hills daily lost their depth of blue, and assumed a greenish aspect. We were nearing them; we could see foliage upon their slopes. Cross rivers became very frequent; the land became covered with a network of these, and our boat seemed one of many gigantic shuttles weaving a gigantic patten, for here, as to a focus, river craft were drawn, and one afternoon, towards the close of a day spent in tracking

through thickets and against an increasing current, we came upon a fleet of them, and suddenly was spread before us the broad expanse of the Ganges. It was an inland sea, and waves, not altogether mimic, ruffled it. A strong current ran down, a fair wind opposed it; but it was too late in the day for trading-craft to enter upon the voyage, for the eastern shore had to be gained, and that was only known by trees on the horizon at one or two points. Native craft were therefore congregating rapidly, and the great majority of those arriving so late in the day, moored for the night safe within the Baghurretty's mouth, for so was the river called whose windings we had traced so far.

I thought of the budgerow again, and pointed to the further shore; then putting five rupees within my palm, I contrived to express to the skipper that these should become his property if he cooked his next meal on the further shore. It was a potent style of argument—the only logic easily intelligible to a boatman of the Ganges; and once more spreading our sail to the breeze, which hitherto we had only used in occasional short reaches, we launched into the great river—the Ganges,—in “the rains.”

The sky became wild towards sunset. We looked for the eastern shore; it seemed as far off as before, and that which we had left was totally lost to sight. The wind, which usually falls at even, was increasing; the western sky was lurid, and the sun went down in a bank of clouds, which rose steadily and against *our* breeze. The “manjee,” or skipper, weather-wise by experience, betrayed anxiety; the men kept at their oars, although the sail drew. At length it flapped, and instantly the bamboo yard fell upon the deck; the manjee had let the halyard run. Another minute and

the two winds met, and the boat's head spun nearly round; the river seemed riven into swirling eddies. There was a struggle between the winds, for it went round the horizon, then settled *from* the westward. The boat's head was turned down stream, and away we hurried—on, on, on—before the storm: one jibe, one shallow, and that voyage had been ended.

The wind came in shocks which gave forth a ringing or splitting sound, an effect perhaps caused by the neighbouring Rajmahal hills, which lay in its route from the westward. The prospect was desolate: the boat's head, now buried in the water, scooped up considerable quantities; we dared not diverge to the right or to the left. I was paying the penalty of bribing. It gave one the feeling of hurrying out into an endless sea, yet we were a hundred miles from even brackish water.

Suddenly a rustling sound was about the bow, and the boat's stern entered a wilderness of reeds and grass, and before her way was arrested she had gone twenty yards into the maze, which closed in upon her, effectually shutting out the river swell and the wind. We had run upon an inundated island, and in so far as the elements were concerned, we were safe. So dense was the jungle grass that a calm was within it. The feathery tops pushed themselves through the Venetian shutters, and drooped over the roof or deck, which formed a little alcove, but destitute of fresh air, for the smell of mud and buried vegetation pervaded the place. We got an oil-burner lit, and a perfect plague of the insect tribes hastened to it, and they unhesitatingly immolated themselves on the attractive flame, and the glass shade of the burner became a hecatomb.

This would not do, so the light was extinguished, and we laid ourselves down, but no sleep would come to us with such a scarcity of oxygen. The

stillness of the reedy brake contrasted strangely with the hurricane outside ; but it was occasionally broken by the peculiar flap of the alligator : we were intimate friends upon that occasion, and almost upon visiting terms. At sunrise we crept forth from our burrowing-place among the reeds ; the west wind had gone to rest, and the monsoon once more blew, and we now gazed upon the broad river, not doubting that we had run before the storm far below the mouth of the Baghur-rutty, by which we entered it on the previous day.

The "manjee" or skipper hoisted his clumsy sail, and the boat's head was again up stream, and drawing to the northern shore, which we gained towards mid-day. The bank was steep, concave, and crumbling ; fractured mud-walls and gable-ends of houses were on its very brink—the half of a village, only deserted a week ago—the other half had slipped into the Ganges. In the next season's rains this half may follow. On this side we crept up towards the Raj-mahal range, which juts into the Ganges on its southern shore ; and when nearly opposite, we stood over to the village which is there. This range forms a sylvan barrier to the river. In these woody hills disease is rife, and wild beasts have an undisturbed lair. Upon a rocky point, round which the river hurries, there is a ruin. Massive terraces have slipped into the stream, and in the dry season huge buttresses of brickwork peep obliquely above the water. But many thick walls are still upright, though riven here and there by the prying branches of the peepul tree. Gloomy dungeons are below ; and narrow staircases, fashioned within the wall, lead secretly from floor to floor. In some of these, scraps of tessellated pavement are visible.

I sat upon a fallen column and read upon it a lesson of the past. 'Tis many a year, indeed, since the sharp

ring of Cossim Ali's rifle was heard among these hills ; no howdahed elephants or silver-maced heralds now loiter in the court-yard ; no falconer with hooded hawks, nor menials with leash of hounds, idle beyond the portal until it please the chief to go a-sporting ; but where all this once was, the poisonous lizard darts past the ruin-seeker and dips into his hole.

There was a shrivelled old man about the place, who seemed to gain a precarious subsistence by cultivating that which was once a mango-orchard ; stooping too early, from living in constant malaria, he prowled about, mattock in hand, regardless of grounds that formerly were gay parterres. I never afterwards passed this spot without visiting it, and as I learnt the language, we (that is, the old man and I) by-and-by knew each other. I looked upon him as the genius of the place. He would at times become garrulous, and on one occasion I moored my downward-dropping boat and lingered two days among the ruins. The old man stood beside me, and pointed out on the northern shore the rising hills of Maldah. He said that among the forests on that side, fallen temples are to be seen, and cunningly carved pillars, and miles of leaf-clad masonry. Stone-built ghauts lie hid beneath the soil, no water now laving them ; but the old man had it from his father, who, in like manner had it from *his* sire, that when these fallen pillars were erect, and these ghauts were crowded with bathers, the Ganges washed them on its seaward errand. These are the ruins of the ancient Gour, supposed, when in its glory, to have been the largest city of Hindostan. When it was a modern city the whole traffic of the Ganges came to, or went from its ghauts ; but legends say that the caprice of a single season's rains diverted the channel of the stream thirty miles from its wonted course, which was never

to be resumed. Half a human generation after this calamity, and the five hundred thousand inhabitants of Gour had dwindled into a pitiable remnant. Hordes fled to other places to seek that bread which the river alone could give them; the jungle crept in upon the rest, and soon grew strong in the fairest parts of the city. Last to leave it were the herdsmen, and some lazy officials of the temples; but these, season by season, died out, leaving Gour that which it now is.

The old man's tradition told well from such a place; a peafowl on a prostrate wall shrieked wildly, then spread his glaring tail, and, ducking his head to counter-balance his after-weight, hurried off skulkingly. It was my fortune to pass these ruins on many occasions. I became quite attached to them, and always felt as if drawing near home when the Rajmahal hills broke the straight line of the horizon; and yet but a few yards within their thickets, a greater wilderness could not be.

Another day, and another fair wind, and another chain of hills, in the "far west," ahead of us. We drew towards them however, and the nearer we came to a spur of mountain, which struck the river as if breaking its back, sudden gusts of wind swooped fitfully through a gully or pass. In floody August heavy clouds gather over the range, now and then tumbling over them like cataracts, which, as seen from the river when the sun occasionally breaks through them, are like pearly "bows of promise" suspended on the bluff and rocky background.

To this mountain-pass the name "Sikkeree gully" is given. The wind was strong and the upward speed very unusual. Leaving the main stream of the Ganges we took to a "nullah," or branch, only navigable in the rains. In this branch we found a fleet of upward-going

craft all anxious to cut off a corner, saving twenty miles by that means, and once more entered upon the great river, just where two grotesque rocks shoot up from the bed of it. These rocks, graduated by an ever-varying current, are pinnacles of granite, abounding in fissures, in which well-grown saplings flourish, and numerous blue rock-pigeons make the rocks their home. A fakeer has for many years had his hut within a cliff: avoid *his* curse, and do not shoot the pigeons.

Then the rough old fort of Monghyr pushed her gnarled bastions into the river. Hard times, and harder knocks, were written by cannon-shot upon her gateways. The bluff and clumsy towers of uncut stone reminded me of strong animals, like the mailed rhinoceros or the extinct mammalia. In sooth you have to go but to the Dewas banks, a short week's sail, and you meet the former quite at home there.

Let us hasten to our destination. It is of little moment to be particular in dates, or to note our progress as succinctly as a traveller. I was soon hard at work acquiring the routine of military medical practice, or "killing and curing," done by contract as it were. My immediate superior was a queer old fellow. For twenty-five years he had been attached to native regiments. During that period his medical lore had not received much addition, and he had relapsed into a simplicity of practice which young fellows of *my day* termed "slow coachism." This was a rare case; for "active treatment" was pretty general throughout the East. Of the peculiar practical traits of this gentleman I may mention one; for it is fresh in my memory. When the condition of a patient indicated that nauseating or emetic effect was required, he would turn round to the apothecary at his elbow and say, "do mukkee doo,"—give him two flies—and the

subordinate, box in hand, would immediately administer two house-flies, which the patient was directed to swallow, "with as little injury to the fly as possible." A very few minutes, generally, were sufficient to prove how much vitality they had lost *in transitu*. If not actually dead the patient soon gave information that the flies were disagreeing with him. They were a capital emetic, and saved the Indian Empire no end of ipecacuanha.

The General commanding the station had considerably put me in station orders, to afford medical aid to "the station staff," himself included. He did not like fly-emetics, nor fly-blisters, and had a great idea of the potency of medicine in its latest form, as emanating from medical schools. The old surgeon was glad to get rid of it, so the loss was a gain to him; and it brought me thirty additional rupees monthly. In virtue, therefore, of this extra appointment, and just as the soup was being put upon the mess-table, I was summoned to render assistance to an invalid, whose boat had just arrived at the ghaut: such demands upon me, I understood, would be of frequent occurrence.

Snatching a few hasty mouthfuls, I was soon in the saddle, and a short-legged pony of mountain-breed bearing me at a fair pace towards the river. I had four miles however, to make good, before I reached its nearest point. Upon doing so I found that I had mistaken the direction, for I had gained the bank above the city, whereas the boat I was in search of was moored below it, and three miles by water. But as the great city (the name of which I have reasons for not mentioning) occupied the concave side of a three-mile reach, I was told that to ride it I must thread five miles of narrow and intricate streets, among a population not remarkably civil to white-faced intruders. Giving my pony to the "syce,"

or groom, with directions to proceed round and meet me at the lower ghaut, I stepped into a "dingy," or wherry, and directed the rowers to drop down.

It was full moon; the river had fallen much, and the current was sluggish in that locality. The scene which now presented itself to my view was such as I have never seen elsewhere: he who could view it unmoved were little to be envied. Every foot of the concave bank was built upon ghauts of hewn stone crossed upon ghauts, wondrously varied, whose priests administered to hordes of pilgrim wanderers. Hundreds of little cells formed wings to these ghauts, some so small as to seem cut in the face of the larger steps, and useless, except as adding to the wondrous mass of architecture before me. Above the ghauts were terraces, and many-storied houses with balconies grotesquely carved, and walls with hanging gardens, over which branches of trees were pendent, margined now and then arcade-like entrances to precipitous streets. Above all was a gigantic mosque, the twin minarets of which looked contemptuously over this city of the heathen. A long line of arches, the foundation of which had given way in the centre, dipped down with a mighty fracture, and through these arches the river flowed. As we passed a temple a mysterious gong was pealing, now digressing into a low grumbling cadence, anon swelling into fanatical din with anvil-like strokes. Upon the ghauts bathers were yet busy; and Hindoo girls were "lighting the lamp of fate," and committing these tiny emblems to the stream which bore them flickering among the little eddies. As the maidens watched them anxiously, shouts of merriment would break forth in silvery voices, and hands would be clasped in supplication. Lights twinkled in windows high in the sky:—it might be that some of these burnt in the chambers of great astro-

nomers, for the Hindoo savans of this city could trace a comet's course, and predict its coming, while Britons bowed the knee before the druid's altar.

Passing the city, I came to a ghaut or landing-place, overshadowed by tamarind trees, among which a little temple lay nestlingly. The budgerow that I sought was moored to the bank just under it; I was soon admitted, for "the Doctor" was expected. In the larger and anterior apartment, on a little bedstead, the brass-rodgy appearance of which denoted its Cornhill origin, my patient lay. A lady in a loose robe of white muslin, lavish in material, and approaching to classical in design, sat upon the floor, her lower limbs gathered under her in Eastern fashion, and her back rather turned towards me: her head was buried within her arms which rested on the foot of the bedstead, over which her body reclined most gracefully. The effect was striking—so much so that it appeared studied; but I soon discovered its reality, for on my entrance she looked up, and on seeing me a faint expression of anguish escaped her lips.

In accordance with custom that lady should have fainted. She well might, but did not. Instead of that she rose, and gazed at me fixedly, her eyes assuming a staring cast somewhat partaking of indifference mingled with an occasional tinge of horror; and she raised her arm slowly and pointed with the index finger of her right hand towards the patient. Rather overcome, and inclined to be tetchy at this stage-struck manner, I took hold of her arm—it was rigid and cold, as if frozen: she was a *living statue*, to all appearance inanimate—marble could scarcely be more so. It was Eunice; and the sick man begged me "to take her arm away," for in her mysterious attitude she continued pointing towards him. Her attitude was very

beautiful—it was sibylline; and, although without words, spoke a warning language which was not to be mistaken.

The explanation of all this was, that the nervous impression induced by the sudden appearance of one whom she would have avoided, instead of producing the usual faintness, had in this instance been productive of a cataleptic trance; an effect not unsuited to the circumstances. The patient could not comprehend this—he seemed horror-stricken, and he once more begged me to remove her. I could not, if I would. She was as marble; and with this dread monitress standing over us, I directed my attention to the condition of Captain Muttonhead, “Honourable” in virtue of “the Peerage,” and “my Lord” his father.

I found him in the remission stage of that very dangerous form of congestive remittent fever, known popularly as “jungle-fever.” The scene just gone through had apparently excited a reaction; and an increase of fever was imminent.

“Walford! can you do anything for me? You can at all events take *her* away. Is she dead? What makes her stand there and point so? I cannot bear *that*—take her away, Walford!—she will strike me dead with the tip of her finger—I feel her doing so even now. Can you do nothing for me, Walford? why did you come? was it to eaves-drop? take her away, I say!”

“I cannot take her away: she is placed there by an offended Maker. I cannot remove her. She is not dead; but to remove her might cause her to die. If that which I can do for you is of little use in this world, may it aid you in another!”

Having suspended a shawl so as to screen the trance-stricken child of folly from the sick man, I requested the “sirdar-bearer” to produce his master’s toilet-

materials; and setting all dignity aside, I quickly removed every particle of hair from the scalp and applied a wet rag thereto. Anon, stepping ashore, I looked for my "syce" or groom, who had just arrived, he having threaded the streets in shorter space than I anticipated. I then wrote a hasty but urgent note to the quaint old doctor, in which, without entering on particulars, I requested him to combine his own aid with that of the station-chaplain and place them at my disposal without delay. This note despatched by the "syce," I returned to the budgerow, and sat down by the patient. The living statue was as I had left her, and I found that all the native servants had abandoned the boat, awestruck, and were squatted whisperingly on the bank.

This evening's fever was a strong attack: I feared that when it waned he would sink rapidly: I likewise feared that the trance might end *too suddenly* and *too soon*. I had time for meditation, and I did not waste it, for my brain was busy that night, though not so tumultuously so as Captain Muttonhead's, which shewed its fevered workings, a trashy mixture—morbid frivolity mingled with the heart-cuttings inseparable from an unclean conscience. These fitful wanderings were a strange contrast to the pallid figure in which life was still pent up, bound with icy and mysterious chains—that hybernation of the soul which stood by, whether conscious or not I could not tell. I placed myself so as to have a full view of her: a single drop of dark blood had already congealed upon the nasal septum, which being naturally drooping disclosed it to me. There was a fitting stillness around, for the servants had spread their pallets on the bank. Their absence was rather a relief, for I felt assured that this interesting but not very usual condition of the

psychical structure of being before me, had not been permitted without an object by Him, who knows when a sparrow falleth to the ground.

I once more felt my patient's wrist: his pulse was waning: the storm of the fever-fit had passed. He was sane again, and his memory was returning. He might have sunk into total unconsciousness from the pressure of effused water on the brain, the morbid product of the last three hours—or he might still sink from simple exhaustion: or again might be reserved for another—and another—ay! and another! I called to the bearer, who came from the bank tremblingly, and I asked for brandy, and water, for such simple questions I had already mastered. He brought me a bottle, a tumbler, and a porous water-vase, and he seemed inexpressibly overjoyed when I told him he might go. I diluted a tumbler of water with a wine-glassful of brandy. As my patient's pulse fell I gave him a spoonful, and repeated it every ten minutes.

“Walford! have you taken her away? Is she dead? I dreamt she was, and that her spirit came and told me I was dying.”

His voice was weak. I gave the stimulant again, and his pulse revived. Once more it fell, and almost flickered. For an hour there was a see-saw between life and death; at last it became steady, and then I knew that he was likely to be a living man for twenty-four hours more. I looked up at the figure; I might be mistaken, but I thought an approach to a smile had passed over it. Could it be, that, without the power of expressing it, that blighted, stricken being *watched our progress*? Poor Eunice!

The pulse was now measuring time steadily, but with a thin and wiry feebleness—a “remission pulse.” I took from a small pocket medicine-case a tiny bottle

of quinine; I had no acid to combine with it, but I put a little undissolved upon the patient's tongue. Notwithstanding its bitterness—the figure looked on mournfully, as if appreciating the bitterness, though drained from another cup.

“Muttonhead! you have just twenty-four hours to be in this world—to-morrow night's exacerbation will be the last. You have not enough time, therefore, to make reparation in full to that now lone being, that fair daughter of this world, the injury you have done her, but, in so far as it is in your power, wipe out the stain—be a man.”

I heard a noise upon the bank: my summoned friends were making inquiries of the slumbering servants. I was soon by them, and I hastily detailed the circumstances; a minute more and we were beside the two chief actors in the scene. The clergyman was a thorough business man—and he hesitated. His “doxy” was turning up its orthodoxical cream, and tickling his conscience with a thistle-down; for he whispered that it was “against the canon to perform the marriage ceremony, one of the parties being insensible.” I directed his attention to the figure—again a smile passed over it mournfully. The clergyman's firmness was relaxing, and finally gave way. At that moment the shawl fell down, having gradually overweighted itself; an inexpressible look of grief had replaced the smile! The clergyman was becoming as heretodox as I was, and apparently was quite ready to join “in vinculo” any number of couples in similarly urgent circumstances.

“Dr. Walford! you would not wed me to the dead?” and a very distinct shudder passed rapidly over the frame of the sick man.

“Dust to dust! ashes to ashes! dead to living!”

living to dead! to this woman will I thee wed, so help me God!"

"Then, Walford, you have hopes of me—I *may* recover?"

"Not so; by every human probability. But all men are liable to error—none more so than you are."

The Chaplain came round, and opened the Prayer Book; he took the sick man's hand, and placed it in the hand of the trance-stricken, which shut upon it with a snap significantly retentive. I removed the ring from his left hand, and kept it ready. It was a most impressive ceremony. As the Chaplain came to the passage wherein his words are repeated, "With this ring I thee wed, with my body I thee worship, and with all my worldly goods I thee endow," &c., the figure slowly upraised her left hand, and the ring was put upon the fourth finger. The ceremony was concluded in accordance with the canon; but the clergyman, deeming the special nature of the case as warranting him, again said "Let us pray," and we knelt. As mysteriously, as coldly, as rigidly, and as devoid of animation as ever, the bride knelt down upon her husband's couch. That was a special supplication—not one usual at weddings—it savoured rather of the funeral service, and spread through the listener's frame thrillingly, more especially the words: "May we walk as children of the light and of the day, that we may all meet where our sun shall no more go down, where our moon shall not withdraw itself, and where the Lord shall be our everlasting light, and the days of our mourning shall be ended."

As *we* arose, slowly arose the trance-stricken. I went up to her and pressed my lips to her forehead. A deep sigh came—heaved, as it were, from the depths of a broken heart—a quiver passed over her features,

the red blood rushed to her lips, and she *awoke*. A glance at those surrounding her, and she at once comprehended what had taken place. She made a step towards me, and taking my hand she kissed it, knelt down and placed it on her head, then folding her hands together she prayed for a few minutes. That done, she resumed the upright posture, muttered "Adieu!" and passed into the inner apartment. Matters were too serious for fainting.

I again put a few grains of quinine on the patient's tongue, and making up a few powders of that substance, I directed the "sirdar-bearer" to administer one in a similar manner every hour, unless a strong fit of fever returned. The Doctor and the Chaplain were waiting for me on the bank.

"Muttonhead! I shall return at sunset (for dawn was already in the east), and I have given directions to your servants to have all in readiness for removing you to cantonments, where I can watch you more strictly. My friend will pitch a tent for you within his "compound."

The Chaplain and Doctor were already in the buggy. I sprang in beside them, wedge-fashion, conveying to all three a feeling of security, from good packing; and, the road being worse than the worst "corduroy" of the "far West," perhaps we owed our safety to our tight fit.

CHAPTER IX.

THE OUT-STATION.

NOT to dwell at greater length on the episode which formed the last chapter, suffice it to say, that the specific action of the quinine greatly diminished the succeeding attacks of fever, and prolonged the remissions; and in a week the Honourable Captain Muttonhead was convalescing. I found by his manner that late events had not made us greater friends; and he hinted that I had deceived him as to the amount of danger. Farewell, Captain Muttonhead! we may dismiss you, and send you to join the gallant corps to which you are *such an ornament!* They went, and no one said "God speed you!"

I was put in charge of a wing at an out-station. From the glitter and formality of a large cantonment we sunk into the numbers of a tea-party; but crisp November had well set in, and in another month it was said we should have an evening fire to mess with. There were no brigade exercises, no inspections, no chakoes and cocked hats, with or without feathers, dashed every morning over parade-grounds with car-

riages and ladies, and gaily-dressed natives on elephants. The "Wing" had retired into private life for a time, turning its back upon the giddy station.

It was on the evening of the day, and Christmas. The little mess of the "Wing" had assembled, blithe and cheerful; for the neighbouring jungle, which four months bygone had acquired rather a lethal reputation, had turned over a new leaf, and the jeel, or swamp, had settled down into a steady, cold-weather sort of demeanour, which seemed to say "My sting has been extracted; come and shoot my wild ducks."

Billets of wood burnt brightly within a fire-place of very primitive construction, and a wooden fender, lined with tin, was absolutely required to keep the embers in order. We all tried to shiver, and to enjoy the fire; and we one and all took some pride in the knowledge that we lived in a latitude where a fire *might be bearable* for two months of the year.

But the spirits of the "Wing" were damped by the Commandant, or president, an unmarried field officer, who had long enjoyed brevet rank as a captain, and whose temper had in consequence been subjected to lengthened trials. The comfort arising from the *casual* absence of the president was very great, and duly appreciated; that individual being singularly uncompromising and tetchy in his disposition—a circumstance the more to be regretted, as he was very regular in his attendance, often sitting down to his meal and rising from it at its conclusion without opening his mouth for any purpose whatever, save the reception and mastication of gobbets of roast and boiled, and six-ounce mouthfuls of brandy-and-water, Hodgson's pale ale, or sherry. For the "Wing" was considered as living "camp fashion," and therefore having a tendency to economy. Seldom, indeed, could any one

venture to soften the asperity of the president, for when attempted it was like the spark from flint and steel which started into your eye and burnt you.

"Allow me to help you to a slice of tongue, Major Smile?" said the conciliating carver of the dish at the Christmas dinner of the "Wing" to the president, who was sombre as ever, and silently "polishing off" the bone of a capon's leg.

Unfortunately the president's taste was singular: he was not partial to slices of tongue with capon's legs, and, moreover, the request had an air of personality about it, in the eyes of one silent at a Christmas board. Whereupon Major Smile raised his eyes to the carver of the tongue, and from those eyes a little battery of knives and forks and other sharp instruments edged and pointed, broken bottles, and malevolent intentions, flashed.

"Sir, shall I help you to some of this?" said Major Smile.

The president had a calf's head and brains before him: it struck him that the subaltern stood in need of some. This threw a damp over the Christmas party, from which it did not recover until the president had withdrawn. Upon his so doing, we thought it possible to have a "merry Christmas," only a short distance removed from the tropics. True, there was no snow outside, nor icicles hanging from eaves, no parish schoolboys sliding on millponds, no misletoe or holly-bush within doors; yet I like to speak of that jocund mess party, congregated in the large room of Tom Walls, the mess manager. We all declared we felt cold. Tom Walls put his head outside and drew it quickly in again, and then ordered the native butler, in an authoritative tone, to put more wood upon the fire. This was instantly done, and produced a little

Vesuvius of sparks, which roared up the now well-heated chimney. Then the remains of the turkey, and a lovely little sucking-pig for supper, eaten with apple-sauce, and a salad fabricated by Tom Walls himself, in the making of which dish that worthy knuckled down to no man. Whenever I have cause to wish myself more cheerful, I think of Tom Walls' room, with its four sporting prints. Tom was a hard rider; he rode his hobby harder than any man I ever met with; it was that of "whittling." He would have whittled the rankest bargain-making, ever-guessing Yankee who ever sold clocks, into a fever. His whittling resolved itself into an art. The headed and thick ends of saplings and walking-sticks became under Tom's hands astonishing representations of dogs, monkeys, and alligators. From these he came to limn the horrible and quaint, dragons' and death's heads, as he expressed it, "true to the life." Tom's friends set great store by these his efforts of genius; nor was he niggardly in disposing of them, which, like all others of his doings, was done quaintly. To a fat friend, he would give a likeness of "Sir John" or Daniel Lambert. To a lean gentleman of sickly habit he would present an anatomical design. A goblin-loving Dean, who has indited many legends of an unearthly character, would have esteemed Tom Walls as a personal friend, had he witnessed the spirit that Tom's simple penknife conveyed to the tail and wings of a spirit of satanic extraction.

Tom Walls was the active principle of the little mess party of the "detached Wing," as we sat round the blazing fire after Major Smile had sought his amiable pillow. He was in the act of taking a likeness of Ralph Rolickson (the ensign of his company) upon the knotty root of a youthful bamboo-twigg; and mean-

while he dilated upon former times, when at another out-station three Misses Brooms, of indigo extraction, and who drove a bullock-carriage, tried various ways and means of getting rid of their names and patrimony by bestowing them upon certain officers of the gallant —th. His narrative probably might have gone on to tell how, when, and where this object, so dear to the hearts of these three young ladies, was ultimately brought about *in another corps*, some time after the glaring infidelity of Tom Walls and others; when an orderly sepoy interrupted it, by placing his shining face within the doorway, drawing himself up pretty stiffly in a salute, and requesting Captain Walls, second in command of the “Wing,” to favour Major Smile with an interview. Exit Tom Walls.

“The Wing and artillery detail are, in *after* station orders, to march in half an hour: no baggage to be taken, but ‘thirty rounds’ per man, and grape, plenty of grape! that’s the orders,” exclaimed Tom Walls on his return, as he abruptly interrupted the party, which had just settled down into pleasant chat again.

In half an hour that cheerful room was dull enough. Those who had laughed and chatted there were bobbing in their saddles, a couple of howitzers were rumbling along the road, and the cheerful crackling of the blazing billets had been replaced by the trampling of men and the clattering of steel scabbards.

The columns of dense fog hanging over the flats of India in the cold season, between sunset and sunrise, are a peculiarity in the climate by no means agreeable to those obliged to march through them at a three-mile-an-hour pace. The chill of a fog-bank passes through the human frame much like cold steel, though perhaps a shade more bearable—at least we thought so, and drew our cloaks more closely. The guns ground sul-

lenly the hard portions of the road, and then would come a dusty or sandy bit, where the horses strained—at times the sepoys putting a shoulder to the wheels and urging them on their way. We took the road towards a great city. There was no clubbing of officers at the head of their column; they were with their companies. The acting adjutant and I took our places in rear of the column, and a great dust feast we had of it. He tried to sing, in an undertone,

“I’ve sail-ed the salt seas all o-ver,”

but it stuck in his windpipe, and was a decided failure. A mile or two of jungle, then an arid plain; then a mud village with or without a fort; then the half-dried bed of a river. And this over and over again, and the reader may fancy how uninteresting a forced night march is in the kingdom of Oude. At dawn the shrill “réveillé” sounded, and a short halt was given. The air of that hour came very chilly; we shook ourselves up, as if we had been sluggards—and no doubt short snatches of a dreamy kind *may* be got even in the saddle; but the rattling brass drum and the stirring fife thoroughly aroused us from our steamboaty sensations. The sun ventured to show his disc above the eastern horizon, and was a signal for the column to fall in. He was like a red-hot cannon-ball; but as he arose in the sky he threw off his bloated and dissipated appearance, and looked respectable. He was just over the broad reach of a winding river, and probably had refreshed himself with a draught; for he was soon in condition to show us the landscape. We were passing a very picturesque clump of trees, near a mud village; a skeleton hung from one, and sundry skulls stuck upon prominent branches of others, were expressive of the political economy of Oude. In one of these skulls a not-over-nice sparrow had built her nest.

Hard by, a youth was driving a herd of buffaloes ; he carried a heavily loaded club which would have done for Hercules. The driver of a primitive plough, in a wretched straggling unfenced field, had girded on his sword to till his father's acres.

The sun had now got higher in the sky, and glanced upon the domes of a great city—a cumulus of mud and brick walls, with pearly spots here and there, where a palace or a mosque gleamed like a diamond on a dungheap : an overgrown conglomerate that city was. It had tall minarets shooting up far above it, and gilded and many-hued domes threw back the morning sun into our eyes as would a schoolboy with a looking-glass, and multiplied his rays a thousand-fold upon the glittering brass and steel around us. We entered this great city by a Moslem gateway ; the armed men thereat did not look hospitable, but they let us pass on ; scornful lips were turned up, and uncivil words came towards us from female throngs, conveyed in female voices. We passed through arcades into noble quadrangles or serais—fine specimens of those magnificent hostelries for which the Moguls were so distinguished ; and weary and dust-covered, and with a now rather strong sun striking on us, we joined company with another column. The men, in obedience to order, “piled arms” in the streets, and the guns drew up, pointed towards a large gateway, from which heavy knobs of iron stood out in formidable relief. We were in the very core of the city of Lucknow.

We learnt from our new friends that the king was dead, and the succession disputed ; that within that gateway the widow sat, forcibly enthroned, with an infant prince upon her knee ; and that a throng of Moslem warriors, firm of purpose, had gathered round her. According to Moslem law, the late king's brother

was the heir; but he could not do his own battle, so gladly asked others to do it for him.

The infant prince was climbing carelessly upon his mother's knee—he, of all that crowd, unconscious of danger. That crowd hoped doggedly for an interposing miracle, although they knew that bayonets bristled beyond the wall, and deep mouthed cannon lurked behind the gateway. No miracle came. The widow kept her seat; her self-sacrificing followers looked to their weapons, and knit their brows and lips, well contented to fall in the coming *mêlée*. As the gong struck the first stroke of noon, they looked grimmer still. With the last stroke, the barricaded gateway sprung from its hinges—a quenching discharge of round shot had effected it. A round of grape followed, and then a tide of flashing bayonets—turbaned heads and corsleted bodies, and shawl-begirt attendants, lay in confused heaps; and blood ran in little channels:—the widow and her child alone unharmed. She sat calmly, and the child thought it was a holiday, and clapped his little hands as the sepoys dug their bayonets into the jewelled throne. It was a “Roman holiday.”

Our work was done, and we held on our way to the British cantonments. As we crossed the winding river called the Goomtee, we looked back upon the city. Mosques, and minarets, and domes, and arches, frowned over our heads; long and high-sterned barges floated on the river, and elephants of the royal stud were knee-deep in the water, drinking.

To the engineer of the present day, the constructor of “direct lines,” the Goomtee is a distracting object; for a stream more pertinacious in turning and twisting can scarcely be. Viewed from a minaret of the city, it looks like the huge snake weaving itself among the

limbs of a Laocoon far more gigantic than ever poet pictured.

A few days more, and I again stood upon the Goomtee's bridge. The morning's sun had just lit up the gilded Emambarrah; and the Moollah's hum from a minaret close by summoned the Moslem to his morning prayer. I looked over the parapet of the narrow high-backed bridge, and thought of the scene three days bygone. I was invited to be present at another. The new king had got his own, and felt grateful, they said.

I came to bear witness that the days of the arena had not passed away—to see how the Neros and Caligulas and Domitians of old raised the enthusiasm of *their* subjects by innocent pastimes, such as the monarchs of Lucknow exhibit. The new king was receiving company. Courtiers in turbans fawned around him—European lips were turned up.

Antagonist elephants waited but the movement of the royal hand to fall to; the signal made, a scene of jostling followed;—it was but play to them, and it amused the king. An invalid lion sneaks into the enclosure, and a tiger in a similar state of health comes forth. Mauritanian lions and fighting gladiators float mistily before us, but their spirit was buried with the Cæsars, and is not found in the caged-up animals of Lucknow; for neither combatant dares the other to the strife, or if by goading one *does* take a grip, it is devoid of the nobility of contest. The king, however, is much delighted; the courtiers around becomingly shout "Sabash!" so zealously that the lion runs cowed into his cage, and his opponent skulks into the further corner of the quadrangle. Then came other combatants, pairs of hyænas, braces of panthers. Anon a gleam of great interest lights up the sea of turbans. Ah! surely something worthy of the Cæsars

is at hand ;—or is the bullfight of modern Spain taking root in an Eastern city? Overstrained anxiety sits on many a countenance—a single peep at what is doing in the arena is worth a broad golden piece, and not to be had at that price. A turmoil is enacting. Conflicting noises rise from the cloud of dust which shrouds the combatants. The Christian fears lest human beings may be mingled with the strife, and he in vain appeals to the native gentleman at his elbow for information. “Sabash! sabash! buhote koob!” Excellent! excellent! very good! and he stretches out his neck to get a better view. Satisfaction sits becomingly on the countenance of the monarch of three days. The combat wanes, and the noises become muffled as it were, and the dust now describing a smaller circle than it did, an occasional leg, or head, or tail, emerges from its obscurity for a moment. Shouts rend the air—the king and his nobles are preparing to depart—the cloud of dust has passed to leeward, and lo! a jackass has with puissant hoof knocked out the brains of a panther! It was to support legitimacy in this brotherly line, that we had shed human blood as lavishly as ditch-water.

Few, very few, of the “Wing” turned their backs upon that city with regret, notwithstanding we had partaken largely of “the king of Oude’s favorite sauce,” and we reached our cantonment at the “out-station,” not much elated with the short campaign. Ralph Rollickson lamented that he had not been “pinked.” He got his wish a few years later, and fell by a potshot from a mud fort. Our return march was taken leisurely and divided, camp equipages having been sent to meet us. We found it pitched in the heart of a game country, and a hasty breakfast despatched, the lighter spirits of the “Wing” separated in twos.

Tom Walls and I strode on and defied the sun; we

flushed a covey of quail. Tom bagged three to my one, and insisting that all four were his, and that I had missed, he stuffed them quite unceremoniously into the pocket of his shooting-coat. In shooting matters Tom was not very particular, having, when at Rugby, been convicted of discharging a blunderbuss full of snipe-dust at a fat boy who would not get up in the morning. The fat boy, seeing Tom bent on manslaughter, popped his head under three pairs of Welch blankets and two counterpanes, and snipe dust from a blunderbuss had tough work in getting through. Only a few special pellets succeeded in reaching the epidermis of the fat boy's very fattest region, looking, as Tom expressed it, "very like a currant dumpling," and the extraction of which required some degree of nicety and not a little perseverance. It required some good management to keep this "sporting affair" from the authorities. A hare started, Tom rolled it over—another covey of quail numbering five, Tom bagged them all. It was becoming alarming, and fearful of being laughed at, I blazed away at a lagging bird and fortunately brought him down. We passed over undulating ground, here deep in long dried grass and there thick in evergreen; sitting down at intervals for a few minutes' rest and gossip.

Tom had, whilst relating the story of the blunderbuss, been engaged in ramming home a bullet into his right-hand barrel, for he had some notion that deer might be about. The bullet had scarcely been driven to the powder when a bustard arose from a tuft of long grass, and sped along the most open path it could find at a St. Leger pace. So much at ease was Tom Walls, that I thought he had no intention of molesting Master Bustard. He went through several little manœuvres with reference to caps and hammers, with as much

indifference as if no game was afoot; and to my judgment the bustard was safe to a chance, before Tom raised his barrel, which soon steadily covered its object. The bustard canted over six or eight times. There was no hurry now: Tom had read Mr. Cooper's squatting stories until I verily believe he had rather been a Scout or a Leather-Stocking, than a major-general entitled to the "off-reckoning;" and in ease of manners, he copied the Scout very closely.

"Well Tom, I never saw a finer shot: I wish it had been a tiger: that barrel, with your eye along it, throws a ball uncommonly true."

"It isn't the barrel or the eye that does it: it is the coat," and Tom looked along his coat sleeves, and down the skirts, and numbered the buttons, as if he took no small pride in contemplating them severally and in the aggregate, and then continued:

"It's the coat, I assure you; and I may say that I don't often miss when I have it on. I never could touch a feather until I became heir to this coat, and no doubt when I lose it my shooting-gift will pass away from me."

"Tom, do you think you could let me have that coat story? I see Buxoo has already got the bustard over his shoulder."

The sun was beating upon us powerfully; so we took off our shooting-coats. Some scrubby bushes were just at hand, and we sat down upon a little hillock close to them. I jerked a piece of a rotten root into the scrubby clump, which was followed by a rustling sound, and a hog-deer sprung out, skipping twenty yards at a bound, like the "ducks and drakes" upon a mill-pond which a school-boy makes with an oyster-shell. Both of Tom's barrels spoke successively, and scathless the springing deer sped to a neighbouring ravine.

"I expected as much," said Tom, with a mortified air, as he laid his empty gun upon the bank and proceeded to resume his shooting-coat. "It just served me right; I might have known better. I've seen the same thing happen a hundred times. Well! I'm a ninnyhammer to waste powder and lead so."

With his arm stuck through the left sleeve of the garment, Tom with a penknife deliberately picked out the sewing of a piece of the collar, and forthwith drew out a piece of folded parchment, which enclosed a scrap of manuscript, on which were these words, quoted apparently from a legal document:—

"I leave to my undutiful son, Thomas Walls, now an ensign in the —th Regiment of Bengal Native Infantry, my gambroon shooting-coat, which has never carried any good luck to me, for it brought infection from the tailor's.—EBENEZER WALLS."

Having read this strange document aloud, Tom replaced it carefully within the collar, and fastened it with the aid of a pin obtained from a "multum-in-parvo" pocket-book, which he always carried on such occasions.

"Wasn't that a nice legacy from my own father? and that because I preferred a cadetship to a stockbroker's desk, and seeing that he left two lacs of rupees to a sneaking old lawyer who wasn't a drop's blood to the Wallses. But I don't grumble: no! I don't grumble, although the garment was sent out to me on the principle of an *infernal machine*, soaked in the miasma of small-pox. The codicil was pasted in the Cawnpore billiard-room as a curiosity in the post-obit line, and the garment was stuck upon a pole in the compound to be looked at."

"Don't wear it, Tom; it's a tempting of Providence," said one.

"It's all the patrimony I'm to have," says I, slip-

ping on the legacy. As I pushed my hand through the sleeve it felt unpleasant *soapy* or so, and I half repented: a fear of being laughed at prevented me from recanting. 'In for a penny in for a pound' thinks I, and called Buxoo to bring me my snipe-gun and other "shikaree"* trifles, and off I trudged into the "kates,"† and in two hours I came back with a brimming bagful of quail. A run of very successful shots dispersed the dread of the legacy, and I returned in triumph. I went out day after day, and regularly filled my bag, and my fame as a shot became considerable: but I knew it was the coat, and others became shy of going out with me, for what was in *my* favor, was quite against them. A young sprig who scouted the idea of luck being in a coat, put it on without leave asked, and took to the "kates:" he blazed away for an hour or two and couldn't miss for his life, and yet he wore spectacles. Next day this younker was reported sick, and in five or six days the small-pox eruption came out, and stranger still, he died—and all owing to this here coat. I never put it on except when the gun is in my hand, and no doubt when it will no longer hold together the shooting gift will go with it. I've worn it for seven seasons already, and it will bear a good deal of patching yet."

This yarn of Tom Wall's was strange enough no doubt. I almost felt its influence to the extent of keeping to windward of him. We pottered on; in the course of the day an antelope fell to Tom's gun. It needs a sharp eye for an antelope, I can assure you; for out he bursts from under your feet in the quickest parody of hop-step-and-jump, and ten to one you miss him altogether.

* Hunting.

† Fields.

CHAPTER X.

THUGS AND TRIFLES.

IT was with no great feeling of satisfaction that I found my domestic sojourn with the "Wing" interrupted by a "general order" by the Commander-in-Chief appointing a senior to the "Wing," and directing me to proceed to Gurmuckteser ghaut, upon the Ganges, to take medical charge of a fleet of boats, in which the "invalids of the season" were to proceed towards the Presidency. Such little interruptions to medical comfort are frequent in Indian service: one gets out of them by degrees, as he rises from the position of "boots."

I fitted out a boat with mattings and thatch, &c., which, although of a Robinson Crusoe style, was comfortable enough in the cold season; for centipedes, cockroaches, and scorpions, had taken to the chinks, and were not likely to come out, unless tempted by the sight of English blankets, which I now found useful at night. A "hot season" and another "rains" had passed over since the events related in the last chapter, and I found myself dropping down a winding

river in Oude, the geographical direction of which was in direct contravention of that point of the compass whither I wished to go. That river was a lonely highway, and not altogether of good character; it was requisite to bring up at villages, and to hire "chokie-dars," or watchmen, for the night—a sort of Asiatic Jonathan Wild fraternity. In about a week we came rather suddenly upon the Ganges, and then took to tracking up the stream; for I had a matter of a month's river journey before me, before I could reach my charge of broken constitutions, plastered up with blue pill, and bought in perpetuity with daily thirteen pences.

Passing the great city where I had bade adieu to Eunice and the Honourable Captain Muttonhead, I did not care to linger there a further space, but bribed the boatmen to forego their "shopping;" and anon a rajah's palace arose from the river, in a maze of niches, tiny verandahs, and arches, all disposed with wonderful taste and with marvellous grouping; and these, toy-like and delicate, strangely contrasted with the massive freestone buttressed wall that serves as a platform on which these airy structures rest, and the sharp edges of which need no chiselling. Within the walls were many occupants; yet none were visible, except a female of low degree, who, draped in dingy muslin, stole down the ghaut steps to fill an earthen jar. From the loopholes in the zenanah wall bright eyes might be peeping at the listless boat, for all that I could tell. It must be warm work within that stone and mortar in the "hot winds" of May; for the inherent caloric had scarcely left it in October: I felt its *aura* cast back upon me as we passed by.

The fortress of Chunarghur is a remarkable place, being the first of the hill forts met with by the traveller

in the valley of the Ganges. A sandstone ridge, washed by the river, has been a likely site on which an Asiatic might build a fort. By the British it has been kept as a lodging-house for deposed rajahs, and other state prisoners. How many captive sighs have been breathed within it? The sloping green bank at the northern aspect of the rock is green indeed for that climate; and the picturesque graveyard, on a knoll outside the wall at its base, sympathizes with these sighs, while we linger to read the names engraved on the white tombstones.

Another day brought my boat to the ghauts of Mirzapore—the carpet-making Kidderminster of the Ganges. Limestone ridges cross the stream at this point, the file-like pinnacles of which lie in wait for a deeply-laden boat, and are singularly effective in ripping a plank from its bottom. Just above this trading emporium is a “cutcha,” or unbuilt ghaut, or landing-place. It is marked by a miniature temple, on which a large peepul tree obliquely throws its shade, with much the air of a giant holding an umbrella over a pigmy; these serve to mark a ferry of some note, for here the road to Central India leaves the Ganges. If, reader, you ever chance to pass this landing-place, you may probably find it occupied by a group such as is not seen every day elsewhere; for, suddenly brought up by the great Gangetic vein, travellers from the Nerbudda valley are here rapidly collected from hour to hour; that Moslem tomb and the leafy awning over it form a sort of trap for human flies; and the grim ascetic, or “Gossain,” who all ashbestrewn, and nude to eye-offending, makes that tree a home, is the mammoth spider of the cobweb.

Let us step ashore and examine this group—there is time for it. They are waiting to embark for the

downward passage; and as hours and days are of little account of in *their* day-books, we may scan them leisurely. Some five or six individuals, rather fussy with importance, cast a superintending air over the party; they are armed with tulwars, or native sabres, and two of them have black shields of bull's hide over their shoulders, on which crescent devices, embossed in brass, are conspicuous; broad shoulder-belts, with large brass badges, invest them with authority; and convey to Asiatics generally a mystic idea of Leadenhall Street—which locality forms a problem hitherto insoluble to the Eastern mind.

But we have left *our* group—a line of squatting figures, too symmetrically straight to be voluntary, and wonderfully merry and much at ease, considering collaterals, were even more note-worthy than the “men in buckram,” already alluded to. One especially appealed to my better feelings; he was an old man, with a noble cerebral development: a few silvery locks rambled about the ears and occipital regions, and he had as silvery a moustache and beard as any patriarch of the Mosaic era. Being rather a lover of phrenology, I stood and contemplated the intellectual prospects which such a brain-box must necessarily give the owner; and when I saw that he was padlocked to the end of a long bar of iron, and that all his companions were similarly held “in limbo,” I must confess that I had certain impressions not particularly complimentary to my countrymen.

I approached the meek-visaged prisoner, and put my hand upon his bald and shining head, and forthwith proceeded to investigate his case, for I was sure that he had had foul play. He returned my salutation as meekly as I might wish; but as my questions were put in an objectionable mixture of Bengalee, Oordu,

and Malabar, the Melancthon-looking old man had great difficulty in understanding me. After this, however, I applied myself to an investigation on scientific principles, and I must say that such a cranium I have seldom seen. I turned rather indignantly to the badge-holder in charge of these convicts (most of whom looked as if deserving of their fate), and requested to know what connection this old man might have with such as these. This official had been accustomed to the vernacular of new arrivals, and soon arrived at my meaning. The prisoners were Thugs, convicted of lives spent in assassination, and this old man was far before the others in "thuggee." He looked on placidly, and listened to this account of him; I expected an indignant denial every moment by him, especially when it was stated that the old man had tied the "fillet" round the necks of some eleven hundred human beings. As I looked at him again, with a phrenological eye, I was within an ace of giving the lie to the native gentleman in charge, when the old man muttered:

"Sutch-bat! (or, 'just so!')"

He had no wish, then, to misrepresent matters; indeed, he was unwilling to forego the renown he had acquired. That night, Phrenology and I had a strong tussle; and she had much difficulty in re-establishing herself in my estimation, for this specimen of the "mild Hindoo" had given her the lie direct. I was not satisfied, therefore, until I had had a further confidential talk with the venerable Thug; and thereafter Phrenology came out immaculate, for I found that this old man, born with the best of bumps, had been reared in the belief that to keep down an increasing population was a good thing, and that every Thug was sure to go to heaven, as his "thugging"

forefathers must have done before him. Old Baharee Lall, the "Thug," therefore considered that his grey hairs were going down with honour to the grave, and in the utmost odour of sanctity; and it would have given him great satisfaction to be permitted to add a few more victims to his unexampled exploits; but to this there were objections.

Phrenology, indeed, was not invaded by a hair's-breadth; it was merely a question of opinion as to what was crime and what was not crime. Baharee Lall had a view of that question entertained by his ancestors, and carefully handed down to him, and whilst taking a human life his heart went not a jot the faster. His only wonder was, how others did not think as he did; and he unhesitatingly denounced his accusers as heterodox to a fearful extent. As I bid Baharee Lall adieu I passed my hand across my wind-pipe. I wanted to assure myself of its being still in the same spot where I had seen it when shaving last. Baharee Lall "salaamed" with the greatest amount of courtesy that the long iron bar thought becoming to the occasion. We were perfectly polite, and merely gentlemen holding different opinions.

Two days further perseverance, and at the end of a two-mile gully in a limestone ridge, confining the great river, even in the rains, within very circumscribed bounds, a mass of heavy stone bastions seemed to fill up the view and prevent further progress. These were the towers of Allahabad; and before arriving at them the river widens out and bifurcates the original stream, taking the eastern side of the fortress, and the Jumna, the other branch, trending off by the western. Deep water occupies the mouth of the latter stream, and is the harbour. A spur of sand juts out from the base of the fortress, in the month of October, and it

was occupied by pilgrims from many places, whose thousand little flag-decorated tents fluttered in many colours. The spot had for ages been held in great veneration by Hindoos, but whether the odour of its sanctity has somewhat faded, now that two or three steamers may generally be seen moored at the Jumna's mouth, I know not; probably smoke and coal-tar are taking some little part in damaging its reputation.

As I passed, numerous rickety and humble bedsteads were left deserted on the sand; whose late occupants had been committed to the stream; and here and there an emaciated tenant still was comforted to die with the Ganges rippling around him. Cholera had done its work among that congress of pilgrims—the sandbank had become spongy with it—and yet they moved not: the Hindoo is a sad predestinarian.

This sand-bank causes the Ganges, in October, to confine itself to a horse-shoe channel of some four miles, where the navigator is impeded by a series of rapids. In order to stem these successfully it is necessary to secure the assistance of fifty or sixty additional men, and a hard day's tracking these four miles are—and when you come to the rapids it requires some nerve. The sixty men are on the bank tugging at the lines from the mast—which bends over gracefully, and the current gleams past close to the gunwale, whilst the “manjee” or skipper steers wistfully; but, remember he is a predestinarian, and once satisfied that your time is come, he would not turn his rudder half an inch to save you. But the sixty pull away with fair strength and tolerable will, for they are on dry land, where I wish I was at the very same moment. Then comes a “thud,” which makes your teeth dance a whole set of quadrilles without stopping; and just as you feel them settling down, and perhaps somewhat wondering

whether you might not have swallowed a few, another "thud" comes, and then a whole series. You rush upon the forecastle to see what you can do by way of assistance; the boat's head shews a most determined tendency to turn down-stream and be off from the sixty, who, save themselves, keep laughing and jeering, and wondering whether the "sahibi kismut" (that is, "the gentleman's fate") is drowning, the sahib himself having made up his mind upon that point, but being suspicious that it may be so. Moreover the prospect may not be improved by the boat some fifty yards a-head, that, bilged, floats by, a wreck, from the broken to the deep water. You cast a wavering eye upwards to your own track-rope and think how slender it is, when suddenly your thoughts are knocked into the latter part of next week by another "thud." Then there is a boat, not further off on your beam than a biscuit's throw, and an aged Hindu, a dealer in rose-water and sandal-wood oil, sits packed in cotton and surrounded by dozens of fragile, badly tempered bottles, of Asiatic make, also packed in cotton, several of which perish with every "thud" his boat receives on the bank she is passing over. There again she strikes—and again—and again. Off with your pantaloons, old gentleman, I would recommend you to consider "duty before decency;" but the Hindoo sits whilst his boat is stove, and is resolved to die with his bottles, for the water is even now rising on his lower extremities. Surrounded by peril, his countenance is unmoved—he is ready to meet his fate. He now and then utters a plaintive "wah! wah!" as his bottles record their own fate by a shingling sort of noise, followed by a little hurricane of sweet odours. He feels for the bottles, and if you would know where his heart lies, you must look for it among them: it is buried there—deep among the bottles.

Your own senses, which have been rather a-wool-gathering, are suddenly driven into you again by a gigantic "thud;" round spins the boat's head in a most unpleasant approach to a polka,—the "manjee" rushes wildly down, and, clasping his hands together, gives you to understand that all is over; for the bottom planks are knocked in. He requests to satisfy himself on that point, and hastily takes up a loose deck plank, when lo! a cataract of invading waters confirm the "manjee's" suspicions. Again he clasps his hands, and rather tired of hand-clasping you give him a kick which is distinctly expressive of your feelings for the moment, and significant of your contempt for predestinarianism. Then seizing a bundle of hemp, which has been stowed within a few feet of the damaged plank, and to which the Hindoo doctrine rendered him blind, you stuff it hastily into the hole and poke it well down with your foot, throwing a twenty-nine pound bag of No. 4 shot above it, to keep it *in situ*.

Meanwhile the sixty, knowing nothing of the condition of the boat's bottom, and supposing that the "manjee" has made an agreement with the rudder to manage itself, tug away again: you shout to them to stop pulling, and they pull rather harder on that account, and then the boat gives a "thud" which, but for the mast you are holding-on by, would have certainly sent you flying overboard, and which makes you for the moment see a perfect galaxy of stars at noon-day. In desperation you seize a knife and make a dash at the mast, and shinning up that important spar, in which you are aided by the knobby elevations typical of the bamboo family, you rashly divide the track-rope—the boat reels round giddily—and the sixty," taken by surprise, measure their respective proportions upon the bank, where you hope they may be at this present moment, bad luck to them! and in which I join you.

Freed from the track-rope or "ghoon," away rushes the boat, but with its side to the current; and a whole ladder of "thuds," somewhat mollified in severity, follows, and you gain the deep water much the worse for wear and decidedly injured in nerve, and glad enough to drop down to the ghaut at the mouth of the Jumna. The rapids had been *too near*, I suppose, for you heard no "Canadian boat-songs."

Three weeks more of lonely tracking brought me to the ghaut at the village of Gurmuckteser. The bank of the river presented a motley scene—all kinds of boats were being fitted up with matting apartments. The invalids were in standing camp, and soldiers and soldiers' wives were as busy as bees, and a good deal of excitement pervaded them. A little skirmish, such as might be seen hourly, was going on just as my boat was being made fast.

"Mistress Molony, dear! I fale quare all over at thoughts of seein ould Ireland agin.—Och! an' poor Dinnis!" (her first husband in a direct line of seven rank and file successively, and equally nearly related to her). "I wonder if the pig is still livin; wasn't he jist an illigant animal. I nivr thinks of him but poor Dinnis comes into my mind."

This remark to Mrs. Molony having been overheard by a countryman, he struck in:

"Arrah Mistress Cassidy! don't be takin on so; isn't it jist mesilf has had a letter from that same pig? and I'm happy to infarm yir he's livin still, and by the same token I'm thinkin he'll be rather ould for pork chops by this time."

"Sorrah! get out wid ye! Pathrick O'Nale, but it's yirself is an onfalen spalpeen, to come over a poor famale wid sich blarney."

"D—l a bit of blarney is that same, Mistress Cassidy;

for here is the pig hissif come direct from ould Ireland to inquire after yez."

And at this moment an abominable long-legged, mangy, measly grunter, of the Hindostan breed, and whose education had of course been totally neglected, hurried past, creating as much horror in the eyes of the Irishwoman as in those of a Hindoo.

"An it warn't that this fist o'mine is over heavy to risk on sich a lanky chap as yersilf, Misthir O'Nale, widout a great chance of murther, it is mesilf would jist polish ye off handsomely this very minute."

"May be it's o' that fist o' yourn that poor Tim Cassidy is invalided. He nivir throve afther his weddin wid you; you rimimber what a polthogue ye hit him afther yir fifth noggin of arrack?"

At this stage of the discourse, Mr. O'Neil, fearful of consequences, commenced a retreat, looking all the while over his shoulder to avoid a bombardment of tent-pins, which Mrs. Cassidy was plying with great energy.

Of all medical duty in connection with a military service that of the invalids of the season is the most irksome. The broken constitutions of last year's bleeding and blistering are congregated in one mass, varied by the additional proportion of females and children; which latter, are not enlisted and therefore not under perfect control. It was with much pleasure therefore, that, in six weeks' time I found this downward trip drawing to a close; and in a few days more I made the whole charge over to the proper authorities in Calcutta, who immediately relieved me from medical charge, and inducted therein a member of the Medical Staff about to visit England on sick-certificate. Next day general orders came out, and I found myself posted to a troop of horse-artillery, quartered at Dum-Dum, the Artil-

lery head-quarters, only some eight miles from Calcutta. My charge of the invalids was thus repaid in a very substantial manner; it made me look back to the invalids with some approach to pleasantness; I looked upon this preferment in the light of a *quid pro quo*.

CHAPTER XI.

A ROMAN HOLIDAY.

THE proximity of Dum-Dum to Calcutta makes it a favourite station, notwithstanding its rather lethal situation in respect to certain marshes, productive of snipes and marsh fevers. A rather gay two months passed over after I had joined my troop—a life as widely differing from that with the “detached Wing” as could possibly be conceived. With these festivities were mingled reports of disagreement with the Court of Ava; and these reports, gathering ground at the Ordnance Department, where increased activity showed itself, at length resulted in a confirmed declaration of hostilities.

I am not inditing a history of Indian wars, but only recording certain experiences in the career of Wilmington Walford.

“Well! we are on the road to Burmah at last,” exclaimed a very young, indeed the junior, subaltern, as a couple of troops were leaving Dum-Dum behind them shortly after midnight, pretty well supplied

with powder and shot, but with no other equipment for a campaign.

“Where *can* we be going to, then?” again chimed in this youth, who was most anxious to have his head taken off in legitimate warfare—an operation for which he thought life was alone worth having. This is a delusion I have often remarked as natural to youths whose scarlet fever has not been got over in the nursery.

“Fort William must be menaced!”

But we were on the direct road to Barrackpore, and it was not very probable that two troops of mounted artillery were to fight a battle on the Mall.

The guns went sullenly along. The slowness of their pace showed no hurry, and yet we were prepared for service—but we had quitted cantonments without waking bugles. An hour before daybreak the guns halted for a time, within a short distance of and in view of the parade-ground at Barrackpore, close to a spot where a party of Sappers were busied in forming fascines, which military screens, before daybreak, completely surrounded us. The guns were drawn up in line, unlimbered, and the horses unyoked, and sentries duly mounted guard. I took my way to a friendly bungalow, and there I soon discovered the cause of our march. Two corps of Sepoys had declined to start for Burmah. On going out to gain ocular demonstration of this state of matters, I found a motley congregation of native soldiers occupying the centre of the ample parade: some accoutred and apparently on duty, others in the centre of the group in various stages of undress, and I could see piles of muskets also. From the verge of the parade-ground I could see outlying pickets in various directions, each a strong body of men. Two unofficered regiments were in open

mutiny, and having refused to resign their arms, they had placed sentries round the spot they occupied, and did not permit any communication with the station. It was said that the cause of this was a deficiency of carriage on their being ordered to Burmah. The natives of India require firm management; obstinate attachment to rights and customs are well-known traits in their character; and being often successful in their appeals when these are infringed, on this occasion they thought that, by holding out, the point would be conceded. They forgot, however, that the circumstances were influenced by the occasion of war.

Such being the state of matters on that morning, it might have been expected that an unusual bustle and preparation might be present. Except the outlying pickets, however, there was less military show than on another day. A mounted orderly of the "body guard" might be seen at the General's quarters, and now and then a cocked hat and flowing feather glanced above the hat tops as an aide-de-camp dashed along. Time had been allowed the mutineers to bethink themselves, and weigh the justice of a military court and the consequences of retaining their arms, and till noon expired they were permitted to remain the unmolested holders of the ground. As that hour drew near and no one left their ranks, and no truce was displayed, none ventured to predict in what all this might end; but as the last half hour for conciliation flew past, with the haste that the last half hour of life does, a stir took place, and the misguided mutineers took to their arms.

A staff officer might have been seen galloping towards them, a native officer, a mutineer, stood out a few paces and respectfully saluted him, and exchanged words. In half a minute the horseman was again at

speed towards the General's quarters, and I thought how much depended upon the message that officer carried, and then the standard of England crept up the flag-staff, and as its blue and red field spread abroad a shrill blast of a bugle came from the same direction.

A distant sound of heavy guns rolled up the valley of the Hooghly, the fascines fell to the ground like a pigeon trap, and the Light Artillery, obeying the distant signal from Fort William, opened upon the passive mutineers. The place on which they stood became a shambles, and those who survived the discharge fled across the space. It was a great butchery, but necessary to the continuance of our power in India.

"This is rather too much of the Jack Ketch style of work for me; it's just sick I am, and that's truth," said a rough trooper, as he placed his harnessed horse beside his gun.

"Come along, Walford! the troop has cut out heavy work for us this morning," said my superior; and, leaving them to return without us, we repaired to the hospitals, where those in whom life still was were already being removed. The scene I witnessed there I will not harrass my readers by describing. Surgery was more noted for its daring than its skill on that occasion, and formed a second act not unworthy of the first in this sad drama, over which I cast a willing screen.

A Rajpoot of high caste, a mutineer, divested of his clothing, would not be attended to. He half reclined upon a stretcher, with his right arm and hand thrown back as a support, and his head drooping. Drops of blood trickled down from a purple fissure in his broad side, and he looked at them and counted them as

they fell, with a countenance expressive of very bitterness. Irresistibly the poet's lines broke in upon the memory :—

“ I see before me the gladiator lie ;
He leans upon his hand—his manly brow
Consents to death, and conquers agony,
And his drooped head sinks gradually low—
As through his side the last drops, ebbing slow
From the red gash, fall heavy, one by one,
Like the first of a thunder shower; and now
The arena swims around him—he is gone.

CHAPTER XII.

EPISODES OF BURMAH.

THREE troops were warned for active service, and were to embark at a short notice. A proper medical establishment was dwelt upon in the general order, and great men shewed how conversant they might be in gallipots and sticking-plasters.

Great satisfaction was manifested throughout the artillery, at this fine chance of being knocked on the head—an elated condition which was now and then visibly clouded, by calling to mind the swamp-fever of the Irrawaddy: no one wished to fight with that.

It is no easy matter to embark mounted artillery for service beyond seas; horses, guns, gun-carriages, shot, shells, grape, canister, and shrapnel, troopers, syces, grasscutters, and coolies. Under these circumstances, the decks of a transport are no very fitting place for keeping notes in neatly arranged journals. Horses, with long faces, swinging mid-air at the fore and main-yard tackles; others waiting nervously for their turn, and others shewing an unzealous determination not to embark at all. The miseries of a transport are mani-

fold; the pleasures of the same conveyance are seldom met with—so seldom, as sometimes to escape notice. If there was any comfort on board the “Fazilbarry,” it did not fall to my share. It has since often occurred to me that we had “some merit in being jolly” on that occasion, and for extracting cheerful sentiments from stale pork, and beef, and biscuits which possessed an inherent power of locomotion; and yet we carried many light hearts, who deemed these small matters well repaid by broken heads and broken constitutions, a coin in which they were paid with scrupulous exactness. The junior lieutenant declared it was “quite delightful, and preferable to cantonments and good dinners.” I never saw such zeal as was to be found in that young fellow: to see him, one would have thought that fighting was the finest thing in the world.

The “Fazilbarry” was no clipper, but strong as teak wood and iron could make her, and roomy for her tonnage, which was considerable. The guns, carriages, and limbers, wheels, shot, shell, and gunpowder, were stowed away below water-mark, the gun-deck hatches well secured upon them, and the gun-deck itself divided by uprights, to which the horses were picketed, “head and heel,” arranged in three lines; rows of watercasks dividing each tier of horses from another, and affording great facility for watering them. The transport dropped down the river, and in due time, and in company with others, dismissed her pilot and was “at sea.”

Ten days afterwards the “Fazilbarry” was hove-to, with calked ports and battened hatches, making what is usually termed “bad weather of it;” those inhospitable “cannibal islands,” the Andamans, dead under our lee. The ship was crank from extra water-casks secured on the upper deck, and in virtue thereof

unable to carry sail to beat-off to the eastward. The skipper, therefore, bore up for the passage between the islands, through which he carried us safely ; and again he hove-to the "Fazilbarry," with plenty of water in which to bob up and down. Creaking timbers, and neighing horses, and whistling winds ! but these were of no moment ; the gale was steady, although the latter half a hurricane. Just peep into this "sick-bay" and you will come out in two minutes sick enough, and scarcely equal to measly pork and weevilly biscuits. It is the fifth day that the "Fazilbarry" had made nothing but leeway ; morn was just breaking ; the gale had overhauled its bellows, and had put a fresh hand to it, and the transport rose lazily to the onward swell, as if still half awake from her disturbed slumbers. Indeed, the "Fazilbarry" had "passed a very bad night," and she, and her cargo animate, stood much in need of soda-water. There was none at hand, so they got an extra dose of salt ; for the wheel-lashing giving way suddenly, the ship broached-to : the next sea struck her in the quarter, purloining the hen-coops, but luckily taking nothing else. Without a recurrence of this the wheel was secured, although it spun round for some seconds at an astonishing rate, and indignantly declined all attempts at a compromise ; but the most appalling mingling of sounds arose from the gun-deck. A water-cask had fetched away, and rolled over the horse close to it, fracturing his limbs and spine ; then acquiring a force *eundo*, and passing between two horses of the middle range, it came in contact with another cask, which it liberated, and like two huge pestles in a great mortar, they ground the horses down into a pill mass.

The horses became terrified ; they tore up the stanchions and ringbolts, and broke their gear like packthreads. The space was rather limited for kicking,

as kicking ought to be, or no doubt we should have had it to perfection. The casks rolled to and fro, and mowed them down playfully. A more fearful scene of uproar could scarcely be. No one could venture down, but the hatches were unshipped, and despite the chance of seas, we had a bird's eye view of it. It had been instant death to have ventured on the gun-deck of the "Fazilbarry," where Pandemonium was in rebellion. Crash! squash! splash! The cry of the terror-stricken horse is an appalling sound. Spare sails, coils of hawser, and a variety of other bulky articles, were pitched down the hatchways; and the rebel casks having knocked each other brains out, these miscellaneous *impedimenta* were soon productive of an improvement in the state of the gun-deck; when troopers, grooms, and grass-cutters, dared to take a part in the scene. These two casks did more damage to the troop than all the arms of Ava.

The fleet of transports rendezvoused at Port Cornwallis, a harbour in the great Andaman Island, and the first fair breeze after recruiting from the effects of the gale, carried them to the Rangoon branch of the Irrawaddy. An anchorage in a hostile river, however, running through alluvial soil, is not much preferable to a gale of wind, with the Andamans for a lee. The Great Pagoda peeped from palm trees and bamboo clumps, and stockades of great teak trees, stuck upright in deeply cut trenches; but the preparations necessary to our landing were not completed for several days.

It was a beautiful star-lit night, and the dark hulls of transports ahead, astern, and abeam of us, were distinctly seen, and even their cobweb tracery against the sky. The ripple of the Rangoon river, as the tide ebbed, was heard against their cutwaters, for there was no wind; the stars shone reflected in the water, and

twinkled more sharply than they usually seem to do in a stifling climate and a marshy soil. The uncouth noises tickled the ears, and the smoke of Burmese fires tickled the nostrils of those who had inhaled sea air for many days, and forgotten the smoke of Bengal. The captain of the transport had added to our party at the cuddy table a few friends from other ships, and we made wondrously merry for once. The junior lieutenant volunteered a song, and took great liberties, if not with the words, at least with the music of the "British Grenadiers," which, under his vocal management, assumed a perfectly new and not easily recognized character; the words alone denoting the intention. However, good or bad, the effect was exhilarating, and we stood much in need of it after the trials of a transport passage. Captain Chub was exceedingly hospitable, and favoured us with a double treat of a few bottles of champagne and a noted sea-song, which ran in a very delicate strain, something like the following :

" A truce to these musty old lubbers,
Who teach us to whine and to think,
That a man can meet-in with life's rubbers,
With nothing but water to drink." &c.

to the extent of some dozen verses, and apparently set to no tune in particular. At the conclusion of the song, Captain Chub left his host's seat, and issued from the cuddy upon the quarter-deck. A moment more, and a plunge was heard, followed by a cry "A man over-board!" and a quick pattering of feet upon the poop above us. Of course there was a general rush towards the scene of disaster, and there direct evidence existed in the person of a half-sleeping seaman, that our host, Captain Chub, had walked into the Rangoon branch of

the Irrawaddy. The witness, who had been reclining by the side of a carronade, and in the immediate vicinity of the entrance port, which was open, stated that Captain Chub had approached his locality, apparently bent on taking an observation, for he examined the condition of the firmament. Of course it must have been for a star that he was looking, for at that moment the sun was engaged on special business a good many degrees nearer the longitude of Greenwich, and the moon was still drinking tea with a small party in China.

The captain probably fixed upon some star noted for its steadiness of character and general good conduct in a Nautical Almanac point of view; for he went to the gangway close to the man-rope port, and after a very distinct examination of it for the space of perhaps a minute, took (apparently in a moment of mental abstraction) one step more than was requisite, which step conveyed him into the Irrawaddy, with a current of some five miles an hour. The hue-and-cry consequent upon this step of Chub's, which was evidently a false step, was considerable; sundry ends of "running rigging" were thrown in the supposed direction, and zealous seamen jumped into the jolly-boat, which being, as usual in these exciting cases, lowered more speedily at bow than at stern, very nearly shovelled the crew into the Irrawaddy; and before this accident had been recovered from, and the boat floating on an even keel, Captain Chub must have been far lost in the mists of night upon the water. An idea was broached that Captain Chub had committed *felo-de-se*; but the fact that, the moment previous to leaving the party at the cuddy table, Captain Chub had unburdened an overflowing English heart in

song, forbade a supposition so derogatory to his character, more especially as the seaman before alluded to declared his belief, that Captain Chub's "observation" was of a very every-day character, and in support of which he stated certain reasons, that left no doubt of his innocence of suicidal experimentation.

"Fine hospitable fellow!" exclaimed a half-overcome youth; "and sings that grog song famously."

"Knows the difference between claret and vinegar," said another logician of the same school.

"Well," said a third, "poor Chub is gone—there cannot be a doubt about that; but still it is a pity to leave all that decanted wine to be drunk by those rascals of cuddy servants. I vote we finish it; but just in a quiet way."

The general wish of the party seemed much in favour of this proposal; and, accordingly, we all returned to the cuddy-table, damped, of course, by the late event. Bacchus, however, lingered at the board; and with each glass of "the rosy," the spirits of the party rapidly revived; and in an hour or so, Captain Chub's untimely fate seemed to his guests as if annihilated by the intervention of at least six months of time. All uncomfortable sensations had passed off: jokes began to strike across the table like tiny bombs from small sized mortars, exploding in little guffaws, only a trifle suppressed below what they had been in the earlier part of the evening. No one arrested these squibs as being contraband; and at length the senior ventured to order the late captain's steward to place another two bottles upon the table, and of course they were placed there. The junior lieutenant was so gratified thereat, that he invited himself to sing another song,

and entered into a historical account, in verse, of a certain Giles Scroggins, who, having paid his addresses to a young lady of the "Brown" family, and whose honeymoon having been interrupted by the sad demise of the former, thinks it necessary to appear in spirit to his disconsolate relict. The pathos which this very touching tragedy is characterized having become matter of notoriety to the ballad-loving public, it is unnecessary to dwell thereupon; but the junior lieutenant, who sat with his face to the cuddy-door, had just arrived at the most interesting and impressive line:

"The ghost he look-ed—all—so—grim—im.
Fal—lal—the—riddal—al—the—day——"

"What is the matter, Joe? Can't you sing out your stave like a man?" cried the youth opposite, whose back was to the cuddy-doorway.

But the artilleryman could not get out another word. Pale as "French white," his lower jaw fell, and he kept his eye vacantly and abstractedly directed to the quarter-deck, paralysed with horror; then raising his hand, he pointed thereto.

There, in the doorway, stood the late Captain Chub, in pretty much the same length and breadth corporeally as when he stepped from his own gangway into the Irrawaddy an hour and a quarter previously, and by no means partaking of a ghostly character. Nay, if anything he looked rather more rubicund than usual; not pale as a person so lately deceased ought to look; and, more strange still, his habiliments looked smooth and comfortable, and had not apparently absorbed a drop of water. The question, therefore, presented itself for immediate solution in the mind of

every individual, whether this was the identical Captain Chub, or merely a reflection of that deceased seaman?

The conviviais were certainly more or less shaken in their several nervous departments, staring in a body at the apparition; but none had courage to speak, probably for want of fitting words, when one, a favoured son of a theatrical amateur, with an air of a Surrey melodramatist, exclaimed:

“Angels and ministers of grace defend us!
Be thou a spirit of health, or goblin damned—
Bring with thee airs from heaven, or blasts from hell—
Be thy intents wicked or charitable—
Thou com’st in such a questionable shape,
That I will speak to thee: I’ll call thee——”

“John Chub, Commander of the ‘Mermaid,’ at your service,” exclaimed that individual, in round English, and with quite the normal amount of gruffness; and, as he looked somewhat sternly round the cuddy-table, he added, “And, gentlemen, I am sorry to break up such a very social party; but it is gone four bells, and you needn’t wear any mourning for me.”

Captain Chub had accidentally walked into the Irrawaddy; but being an excellent swimmer, and even a little at home under circumstances which to the generality had been trying, he resolved to take it easy, and not expend his energies in attempting to reach dry land; but contented himself with steering his course by the mooring-tackle of some ship further down. After missing two or three, he at length successfully laid hold of one, and was soon “hand over hand” and on board. Captain Chub, having got a change of longcloth garments and a glass of grog, then

returned to his own ship to alleviate the distress caused by his disappearance.

The Burmese campaign brought to those who took a part in it more returns "in kicks than in halfpence," bearing interest which accumulated in the compound ratio. But time passes by, and tells one cavalierly, that a quarter of a century has been checked off on the dial since many a gallant heart pulsed for the last time before the strong stockades of the Ava river. Taking these was no child's play: cannon shot found them too tough for mastication. Staunch Burmans sent well-directed shots from behind them; and over and over again the daring European, and the dashing sepoy side by side with him, were launched back upon those mustering behind, and had to try it once more.

After encounters like these, there was work in the field hospital. The medical department, ordinate and subordinate, had their hands full, and acquired some knowledge in gunshot wounds, and three-cornered lesions in the cutis effected by the bayonet; and, save in the "science," which is held to cast an unintelligible haze of gentility over the art, we were little above the condition of pork-butchers.

A skirmish was expected; and, before it had begun, a wounded officer of the troop was brought to us. A cloth had been thrown over him; and when removed, he was found stone-dead. His gold-braided jacket was cut here and there, and terribly torn; he had died by sabre cuts, for many had alighted on him; and his sword-hand had been shorn off. It was the junior lieutenant, poor fellow! That young Englishman had been a gay trooper; and though no match for Captain Chub's ghost, he had shown no fear of the Burmese.

In the act of superintending the unlimbering of his gun to dislodge a body of Burmese horse, the young lieutenant's charger, a vicious dun of Asiatic breed, tempted by the neighing in the ranks of the enemy, sped suddenly in their direction, with head bent down to his knees, and the bit held tightly by his teeth. His rider, unable to pull up, and knowing what was before him, was an object for both sides to gaze at. That fearful steed dashed on. Who can tell the thoughts of that gallant boy? we may suppose them from his deeds. He settled himself firmly in his saddle, part and parcel with that which bore him; and, as he approached the foe, he calmly drew his sword, and entered the armed mass. A hum of sensation and a clang of steel passed over the plain towards the friends he had left; and a cloud of dust (somewhat masking the Burmese) gave evidence of excitement among them. The gunners, who had watched their officer, prepared to avenge his fall with a round of shot, when they were arrested, for a renewed clashing of weapons was plainly audible. Could the rider of that steed be still in life, and still fighting for it against that host?

A shout arose among the Burmese, and then the well known hard-mouthed dun burst forth, and dashed madly towards his own troop, still bestrode by his beardless master, who sat him like a centaur. They came tearing along; blood was upon them, but that it was not *all theirs*, the Burmese themselves gave admiring and willing evidence; and as they reached the wheels of their own gun, they dropped dead! horse and man.

He who has not witnessed it, can but imperfectly realize the discomforts of a campaign in a tropical

country, and on an alluvial soil. I have a rough idea of it: the recollection makes me feel myself growing, shooting up, white and blanched like a rice stalk, as I felt when I was wont to be roused from a nap in a pool of water, with armies of Burmese frogs croaking your invasion; and seeming to scatter disease abroad, bringing death with dawn, and the "Dead March" with the evening sun; for all sickened, and I was not forgotten. "The Doctor" pressed my hand as he turned away; nevertheless, *he* was dead upon the morrow; and I am, at this day at least, a living man. I have often meditated on that contingency. When I asked the attendants if the doctor had not arrived, they told me in a matter-of-course style, that he was dead. I had seen him in health twenty-four hours before. Death or "the Doctor," had been practising sharply; it turned out to be the latter this time, the former only assisting him, as a friend, after "all had been done that could be done." For the doctor fell an unintentional victim to his faith in the therapeutic universality of quinine; which he insisted upon swallowing in large doses, to allay the fever concomitant on bleeding from a ruptured vessel in the lungs, the sudden result of a strain in lifting! This gentleman was a medical Palinurus, and yet he ran himself ashore on the very first opportunity.

There was no recruiting of the system amid the bamboo-thickets and rice-fields of the Irrawaddy; so a medical committee told me I might be off to Bengal, with the next transportation of invalids; a decision which augured some skill on the committee's side. They did not incur this responsibility without thorough investigation; for although I presented a cadaverous countenance, and sufficiently attenuated limbs, I was

forced to enter into cognizances, that I had partaken of every preparation, simple and compound, recorded in the Pharmacopeia, as possessing or supposed to possess curative properties. I felt I could do so with a clear conscience; I was the tomb in which a whole laboratory had found a grave, barring the show-bottles in the window. Indeed I was fearful that the committee might discover that these latter had been omitted, and might order them to be taken forthwith; for on active service a man takes a pill referentially to zeal for the service, and totally irrespective of instinct; and obedience to superior medical acumen as resulting from seniority, forms a cardinal virtue; which scouts any appeal to mercy whispered by the mucous membrane.

That I had not sufficient reverence for a medical hierarchy, there could not be a doubt; as I will soon make evident. A few days more found me in possession of "room for swinging," on board of a little brig; the cargo of which I never exactly discovered, but which I have always thought must have been cockroaches, these highly interesting insects were so numerous.

The "Tinker" was very crowded; a large party of invalids taking passage in her, a cross old son of Esculapius being in medical charge of the same; whose entire medical experience was limited to that interesting department of therapeutics, to which the adjective "drastic" applies closely. He was a stickler for military obedience in therapeutic matters, and thought a pill should pay respect to an order from a senior. In accordance with this principle, so becomingly laid down by Surgeon Swiveleye, the invalids led what is usually denominated "a dog's life," a state of being

well understood by charity boys, ensigns' servants, tutors, and governesses.

Mr. Swiveleye's naturally crude temper was additionally ruffled by want of success in universal "catharsis," for under his care, and notwithstanding sea-air, the invalids were marvellously slow in gaining flesh and strength. This mortification was much increased by my refusal to be physicked, and the singular fact that I improved rapidly in consequence. Mr. Swiveleye signified disapprobation at this result, and imbibed a great hatred towards my increasing corporation; the evil thought occurred to him, that, in conformity with hints from me, the apothecaries nullified his prescriptions by injurious and acrid additions of their own, given for the sheer purpose of injuring his professional repute—a perversity of medical human nature, that I am certain did not pervade the subordinate medical department. But the idea established itself firmly in Mr. Swiveleye's pineal gland; it never struck him that ten-grain doses of calomel, croton oil, colocynth, gamboge, &c., possessed but a very limited amount of nourishment at least. I often wandered into trains of deep thought on these matters, and once in an unfortunately facetious moment I ventured to make an algebraic calculation of the therapeutic effect of a bagful of pills administered to the Burmese by a nine-inch howitzer, and submitted it to the consideration of Mr. Swiveleye, who, petrified at my daring irreverence towards him, and want of zeal for the public service, in a most authoritative manner, and with fire flashing from his eyes, (particularly from the left, which being strabismically affected, suited his patronymic to a tittle) desired me to consider myself under arrest.~ Indeed he went so far as to request the officer in command to place

a sentry over me with his bayonet fixed, to take care that I did not break that quiescent condition, by walking overboard; an amount of caution which the latter did not think necessary.

Thus far there was no great cause for alarm. The display of authority did not entirely overpower me; but in a fit of mental abstraction, I hastily made a pen and-ink diagram of a human proboscis, with a very liberal supply of digits radiating from its tip, on the vacant space above the pill-power calculation.

At this moment Mr. Swiveleye returned, and appropriated that document, as a future evidence against me. Mr. Swiveleye gave occasional hints to sundry persons, that he had made up his mind to take no rest, until he had "kicked me out of the service;" in which event I bethought me of returning the kindness, leaving out the metaphorical features of that amiable operation, and converting them into plain matter of fact; a possible metamorphosis, which probably did not occur to him at that moment.

Preparatory, however, to sending in "charges," he laid the whole matter before the officer in charge of the invalids; who listened to the various items of complaint.

"What is this, Mr. Swiveleye?" said Captain Brandywine, pointing to the etching or scratching at the top of the page.

"That is known popularly by the term 'Snooks,' Captain Brandywine; and an exceedingly contemptuous mode of expression it is."

Upon this, Captain Brandywine, who considered himself in the position of a friendly referee, and not in authority, placing both hands to his mouth, produced a curious inflation of the cheeks.

"Captain Brandywine, I am really astonished at an officer of your service and experience, looking so lightly on this matter," exclaimed Mr. Swiveleye with an air of remonstrance.

"Snooks! Snooks! what does it mean, Mr. Swiveleye?"

"That's 'Snooks', Captain Brandywine!" and here Mr. Swiveleye put his thumb to his nose, and solved the problem; a *modus probandi* which had such an effect on the former, that after several ineffectual attempts to suppress his feelings, he, with great judgment, let them have full scope; settling down by degrees into that semi-passive condition of the physical man, so much resembling a jelly-like or tremulous motion; a usual result of a hurricane in the risible faculties.

"Mr. Swiveleye, if that's 'Snooks,' and Mr. Walford's offence is limited to its expression on paper, it will rest with you to specify the amount of contempt, and the precise force of the same. As I understand myself, however, to stand in the position of a *friend*, I would (with deference of course) advise you to overlook the matter."

Mr. Swiveleye, greatly disgusted at the absence of military etiquette in Captain Brandywine, retired from the discussion. I need scarcely say that Mr. Swiveleye did not think it necessary to pursue the matter with his original amount of virulence; but he created a safety-valve sort of ease to his feelings, by prescribing innumerable dozens of pills of the most drastic quality, to the invalids; and seemed to derive an amazing amount of pleasure from absolutely seeing them taken; which he termed "zeal for the service;" the invalids, however, did not recover in a ratio commensurate

therewith; and Mr. Swiveleye's astonishment thereat was great; for the zeal which he displayed in goading their internal organs, was incessant; whether it was appreciated by the authorities at the presidency, I know not. Mr. Swiveleye thought it was: and that was something.

CHAPTER XIII.

AUCTIONS AND AMATEURS.

I HERE omit a few monotonous years, possessing no particular interest. Hot cantonment-work, varied only by an occasional charge of a treasure-party, gradually baking me to an Indian consistency.

I was again at the Presidency, with three months' leave before me. It is a book worth reading, if you know the type: I set myself to the study of it.

A man is not long in discovering that public auctions are a singular feature of Calcutta life. In England such have a limited respectability; buyer and seller alike appearing as if he would willingly pass through the ordeal unmarked; for, in the public eye, it is approaching to bankruptcy in the one, and meanness in the other. But as neither of these conditions are detrimental to an Englishman in the East, so long as he can keep out of gaol, it matters little. Indeed, to be in debt is a commendable thing; far more so at least, than eking out a slender monthly stipend, and making it suffice, and foregoing the pleasure and "fine-fellow-ism" of treating your friends to roasted turkeys and Westphalia hams, and Stilton cheese at

three rupees a pound, which, when converted into coin of our sovereign lady Queen Victoria's realm, is just a modest six-and-sixpence. But the most severe censure is due to him who is degraded enough to accumulate a little surplus against a rainy day—such as a furlough, or a sick wife's or child's transportation to a bracing air.

But I talked of auctions: classical institutions in Calcutta.

“Come with me, and I will be your guide. We shall see small dealers untrammelled, and looking great, and buyers, up to thousands, looking very small. As yet of course you disdain to buy and sell: never mind, you will know better by-and-bye.”

This I remarked to a friend; and leaving the “south barracks” of Fort William, in which we had adjoining rooms, we were soon in a great auction-mart. He was a freshman. Every possible thing, moveable and immoveable, were there brought to the hammer, on the latest principle of commission agency. The real value of a thing is what it will bring. If you doubt me, just try another mode of estimation and placard it in the mart at Tank Square: how they will laugh at you! The man rejoicing in a monthly allowance of two or three thousand rupees, or perhaps the treble of it, does not deem his respectability detracted from by sending for sale a few old chairs or some odd dozens of broken bottles, or a set of musty harness, that, when new, and within the Cawnpore Bazaar, cost rupees sixteen; and, upon the same principle, a man of equal means may buy the rubbish, unblushingly, with all their imperfections. An Englishman daring to do this in England might have his bill declined at his banker's, and his intimate friend might pass him by in the street, with his eyes cast down feelingly upon the pavement.

It was a Tuesday ; horses, dogs, and vehicles, of every make and age, were soliciting new owners. There was a buzz there, and it came from a motley crowd. A "griffin" cadet, arrived the day before, went there to show off his blue frock and gilt scales ; it was the only blue frock there ; and this youth, with apple-tart still upon his lips, soon and unceremoniously rubbed shoulders with a son of Tippoo, the cruel tiger of Mysore, and Tippoo's heir looked as if he had been fitted out in Monmouth Street. A civilian with a moustache, a lace-capp'd staff officer without that distinction, a captain of a China-trader in grass-cloth jacket and flappy hat of Manilla-grown straw, a Eurasian "section writer," a "Baboo," or Calcutta native merchant, chewing betel ; these I pointed out to my friend, and asked if he would be introduced to any of them, for in that place there were many signs of equality.

The "cadet" bought off-hand a lanky horse, with a spavin and a Roman nose, at which lace-capp'd staff-officer smiled: it was *his* property five minutes by-gone, now it belonged to an unposted ensign. But the value of a thing is what it will bring, and therefore the "cadet" has got value for his money. Staff-officer with laced cap smiles again, and would twirl his moustache if he had one, but a sense of the deficiency makes him cast his eye towards "civilian," who has, and who is partaking of that refreshing indulgence (being the third time within the last two minutes), at which "staff-officer's" upper lip betrays a slight inclination to peep into the nostril above it. "Unposted Ensign with blue frock," ignorant of "staff-officer's" knowledge of "lanky horse with spavin and Roman nose," requests "staff-officer's" opinion on his purchase, upon which the latter answers :

"Uncommon good tit! goes better on three legs than most nags can upon four."

Let us note these men upon "the Mall" at 6 P.M. You will scarcely know them again. Equality and fraternity there are limited to those with "the parchment" of the Horse Guards and Leadenhall Street.

We drove slowly on "the Mall," and identified it as a "capital" in the big-letter-type of the "City of Palaces." We took the river side: this was a lucky hit. Had we not done so just at the fitting moment, a collision must have taken place with a bright cab and a fourteen-mile-an-hour-trotting dark-brown mare. The whole turn-out said as plainly as if gifted with speech, "Stand out of my sunshine;" and yet sunshine was no rarity in that place; notwithstanding which we were begrudged our share. But the mare was worth looking at; her pasterns and fetlocks were as hard and smooth as bamboos, and the sinews played over them as limberly as catgut, and she made a succession of reversed C's with her fore-legs, which, in stable parlance, is "high action." The fashionable youth, in plain clothes, who sat behind her, did not think it necessary to put on an air demonstrative of having prepared himself for driving by swallowing a ramrod, but, *au contraire*, lounged, with one foot on the splash-board. The pedal member had a high instep, which strained the upper aspect of a silk stocking; a lady examined it in passing, through an eyeglass. The whip was in the box, it might have been at the saddler's, for the mare drove herself, now looking down at the curved shafts, and then at the covered buckles. There must have been a stitch out somewhere, for she seemed uneasy. But where is she now?—at least a mile off.

A britzka with a high coach-box overtook us; a lady leant gracefully from it but with an air rather

approaching to ogling—and my young friend blushed. Vermilion and plumbago had a place upon her toilette table, the latter converting black eyes into blackened. Her lord drove this family conveyance, a youth with a chain and an eyeglass, which looked queer with the “ribbons” in his hand.

Our attention was now diverted from this family party, by a rush followed by a partial collision. Three cadets, with blue frocks and scales, their first appearance in military costume, and mounted upon suspicious-looking horses, which they were apparently unable to manage, had run into the britzka frantically. The circumstance created no sensation on “the Mall,” it being a common occurrence with gentlemen of this length of service. As they drew off in some confusion, which did not extend beyond their own sphere, I recognized “un-posted Ensign,” but he had no time to look at me, for his new purchase engaged the whole of it.

A noble grey passed, picking his steps like a dandy on a rainy day, but spoilt by a white silk netting, and a rider who sat him like a sack of beans, while he fancied himself Ducrow. “But who have we here?” Ay! you may well say so; the most perfect thing on “the Mall.” ’Tis the lady I saw only two evenings since, leaving “No. 1 Chowringee,” where her husband has temporary apartments, until some little difficulties of twenty years’ standing are arranged.

The turn-out, faultless to a buckle, broke off to the left, at rather a smart pace. I tickled “dun Bob’s” ear with the whipcord, and he shook his head, as much as to say, “I have some go in me now, see if I haven’t.” But “dun Bob” had some work to overtake the lady, and to keep ahead of a smart Pegu pony in a little stanhope, behind which sat two pale-faced men, whose features were picked out with antimony and plumbago.

They had cone-shaped headgear of highly glazed brown chintz, which advertised them as Parsees—Guebers—Worshippers of fire. For this caste most of the twigs of the famed pagoda-tree bear fruit, and they tightly keep the purse-strings—the Parsee is the man for a ledger.

In no time almost we passed the Fort, and then the huge Court House, and the General Hospital, and, gaining the Gaol, behold the latest importation from Long Acre! The lady had gone to arrange about her pin-money for the month which only ended yesterday, and will limit her stay to ten minutes exactly, by the tiny “McCabe” that now and then glitters among her muslins.

The gaol, or “No. 1 Chowringee,” is a place of some luxury; and occasionally there are lodging within it, gentlemen *par excellence*, whose reputation is not much invaded by a residence there; for it differs widely from the “Fleet” or the “Queen’s Bench.” The sentries salute the gentleman debtor (if his skin is European) as he passes of a morning into the courtyard below for an airing; and the saluted may or may not condescend to acknowledge the civility. A bland manner and insinuating address are essential to a Calcutta bailiff; he is often appointed in virtue of them, for with a white-kidded finger he must tap the shoulder of a gentleman, and be careful of the nerves, for they are delicate in the East, and can scarcely stand the rough-and-tumble of old England.

Next morning at sunrise we were on the Esplanade, and recognized a few of those we had seen on the previous evening. The overdressed loungeur of the cab inhaled the “wild freshness” of a Calcutta morning; but the cab was in its shed, and the dark brown mare was in her stall, and a broad-loined chesnut with docked tail carried him. The loungeur of last night no longer lounged.

European "tops" garnished his knees, immaculate cords sat in folds around the cantle of his hunting saddle, and the lappels of his "cut-away" met through the instrumentality of a single button of sporting device. A silver-wired Malacca cane rested beneath his arm, the snake-like thong knowingly gathered up and twisted round his wrist. Altered as much in manner as in dress and equipment, the listless fatigue and essence of refinement were scattered by the air from the Hooghly. In morning garb, and bestriding a chesnut worth a thousand rupees, he was just casting up hastily the odds on "Plenipo," for he was a sterling business man. The staring lady stared from the back of a gulf-Arab; her complexion had been washed off, and the sun was up—a very prying fellow in Calcutta.

Close by was a Brahmini cow, and a buffalo of domestic breed, and on the back of each a Calcutta crow was perched; a quaint bird, keeping himself so spruce that no one could suspect him of bad habits—yet his brother was dropping down the river on the floating body of a Hindoo. This bird, you will observe, trims his feathers as feathers ought to be, which are glossy and thriving even upon gross feeding. A Calcutta crow has much wit in him, and can often raise a laugh in lookers-on. He breaks his fast at the "Kali ghaut," then hies to the back of a buffalo, and perching himself between the horns, he looks down towards the nose, as if inquiring for the bovine health; peers into one ear, then into another, as if expecting to find something there—which he often does. He then traverses the back-bone, as if on a metrical survey; and, ultimately, does not forget to examine minutely the way in which a buffalo's tail is set on. Then, rejoicing that all is as it should be,

he descends the caudine member, hand over hand, like a thorough-bred tar. There is something in the Calcutta crow beyond feathers; I am quite convinced of that, after some experience and much observation of the bird.

CHAPTER XIV.

TRICKS AND TIGERS.

I WAS one morning in "General Orders" to proceed to the station of Dacca, to the eastward of the Ganges, and only come-at-able by a fourteen days' solitude in the Sunderbunds. I had three days' fever in every ten; that is, fever every third day—a condition not likely to induce plethora except in respect to the spleen, which sometimes becomes so at the expense of the other organs.

I had no sooner read this order, than I hastened off to bespeak the influence of a gentleman who had something to say in this and similar arrangements. I had much ado in ferreting out his abode, and when it was pointed out to me I doubted my informant, for the gaunt building that had not seen whitewash for many years, and the Venetians of which had been as badly used in respect of green paint, ill accorded with my notions of a becoming residence. I reconnoitred, therefore, before advancing into an unknown country. The "compound" or inclosure was grown up with strong grass, except a circular exercising path for horses, which

was well beaten down. I could have guessed the whole fabric was tenantless, but for the fact that eight or ten native grooms were about, and a very smart European in top-boots and waistcoat of red and white stripes, bore upon his face the words, "I am quite a gentleman here, and won't work."

I ventured to ask this smart gentleman of no work if Mr. So-and-So lived in the neighbourhood. Without answering, he looked over his left shoulder towards the doorway; and taking this for an affirmative to my question I drew towards it, wondering that the unpainted Venetians were deficient in number, and that on entering the doorway I had entered a stable, with ten thorough-bred racers in as many stalls.

A "bearer" or body-servant was squatted within it, nodding from want of occupation; and, on touching his shoulder, he informed me that the gentleman I sought was "ooper," or above, and he forthwith rushed up a trap-stair in the corner of the stable. I followed him to the upper apartments, the air with every step becoming more ammoniacal, and at length I reached a large apartment in which beds, tables, chairs, bookshelves, and veterinary apparatus lay in admired confusion. From another apartment the gentleman I had come to see entered. He was a tall spare man of hard visage, with a few straggling white locks about the temples. Somewhat morose in manner, with a very grave countenance, he listened to my application; he then knit his brows, and, as I thought, was preparing for a thorough onslaught on my feelings. At length he said, "Well, you do not look very robust, but I see no reason why you should not recover to the eastward."

It would have been folly to say another word: I bowed myself out, my heart overflowing with zeal for

the service in general, and affection for the old gentleman in particular. He was a perfect icicle; but it was not *all* loss, for he cooled me down in a climate where ice sold for a shilling a pound in those days.

With such a prospect, I thought it wise to settle a few trifling matters. The days had passed when the pagoda-tree bore for medical men blossoms which ripened into fruit: such buds matured slowly, and here and there a *very rotten branch* might be met with. A few stray berries had occasionally accumulated with me at the fag-ends of months. At first I thought little of them, they were so miserable, but insensibly they filled a bag or two, and ultimately became inconvenient in my own hands. I looked out for an investment.

I well remember the circumstances connected with my first interview with Mr. Soaphimwell Planter, of Soaphimwell Planter and Co. He sat at a business table groaning under red-taped bundles. A lengthened residence in the climate of Calcutta had nearly equalised the white of his countenance and his jacket. The cuticle of the former never perspired—it had relinquished that function years ago, and mosquitoes never hazarded footing upon it. Why it was so, I cannot say; but as the apartment was in the heart of the business part of the city, and swarmed with them, the exception had its advantages no doubt; for *he* was quite intact, whilst I kept patting my forehead and my hands; somehow they never troubled Mr. Soaphimwell Planter. An expression of severity at times came over his countenance, and his eyes were peculiarly penetrating, but when he spoke, his voice did not correspond thereto, for it was mild and musical. I stated my business.

“Mr. Walford, there never was a time in which greater caution was required in monetary transactions.”

I bowed to Mr. Soaphimwell Planter's superior judgment on these matters.

"It is difficult to make money now-a-days, Mr. Walford: but great as that difficulty is, it is nothing to the difficulty of keeping it. Mr. Flashington Fagge, of the firm, Mr. Walford."

And a gentleman also universally white except the vest, which was of silk velvet of an elaborate pattern, and having too much of a fancy-ball effect for half an hour ante-meridian, entered, with much ease to himself and without any sense of intrusion; for he was of the firm, and junior partner. The waistcoat did not make a great impression upon me. I knew that mercantile gentlemen and civilians had a weakness in the way of waistcoats, an honourable exception to which rule was Mr. Soaphimwell Planter, who adhered to longcloth; it was a firmness on his part which increased my confidence; indeed, little as it was, it was money to the possessor.

Time, I have ever considered as money to all who earn their own bread, so I continued my visit no longer than absolutely necessary to get his advice on the investment of a few thousands, not of pounds, but of rupees only.

"Mr. Walford, the best thing going is the 'Lion and the Unicorn Copper-into-Gold-metamorphosing Company and Transmogrifying Association:' allow me to buy in for you, if I can get a chance of purchasing at one-thirty: only look at the names on the direction as a guarantee to the public!"

I bowed and left myself entirely in Mr. Soaphimwell Planter's hands, who most politely accompanied me two steps and a half towards the door, the mosquitoes judiciously making way for him. A couple of days afterwards, Mr. Flashington Fagge did me the honour of calling at my quarters. He mounted a black frock besilked about the collars, an article of

costume in high fashion, despite the thermometer; white pantaloons, white silk stockings, and pumps, cruelly circumscribed in toe accommodation. He was the "entertaining partner" of the firm, taking upon himself the hospitality department of the concern—a position bearing some analogy to a master of the ceremonies in a semi-private sense. I thought I had seen him before, and at last remembered him as the owner of the bright cab with the fifteen-mile-an-hour mare. Mr. Fagge staid a minute exactly, and as he left, he begged to assure me that there was always a cover placed for me at his table at 7 P.M., whenever I was at the Presidency.

A few evenings subsequently, I bethought me of Mr. Fagge's invitation, and rather as a study of human nature than of gastronomy, I popped in just as the bright cab with the fifteen-mile-an-hour dark brown mare was being led from the door.

"Ah, Walford! very glad to see you. Having found your way here I hope you won't forget it. Allow me, Mr. Walford! Colonel Crickett, Mr. Fitzflint of the Light Infantry, Buggins of the Cavalry, and Mr. Jocelyn Scragge of the Civil Service: probably you know one or more of them already."

I had seen the latter, but under trying circumstances; so I refrained from reminding him, which, had I been a friend, I certainly might have done.

"Oh! by-the-by, Walford, Planter of ours made a good *plant* for you this morning. What do you think? "Lions and Unicorns," one-twenty-five; five under the figure he promised you! isn't that doing business?"

I thought so too, but somehow I did not feel quite so elated as perhaps I ought to have done. Nevertheless, the claret was unexceptionable, and Crickett,

Fitzflint, Buggins, and Scragge, did no small justice to it: they had gone through a seasoning process.

I was certainly struck with the general turn-out of Mr. Flashington Fagge's dinner-table,¹ which groaned under a service of plate such as I have seldom seen, not even at the table of my noble friend Lord Patronage, with whom I have on more than one occasion dined.

"I think you occupy quarters in *my* range," said Mr. Fitzflint of the Light Infantry.

"Perhaps I do: I was not aware of it: I am in the South Barracks."

"Grilling hot place, don't you think? just a sheet of brown paper between it and a certain place a little hotter still."

"Really I am no great judge, but after a small experience in Burmah, and a trifle of transport work, I rather take to it. I'm not particular by any means."

"Well! I do nothing but steam and smoke. I'm a steamer in every respect! I shall rouse you out to-morrow."

Such was the style and tenor of Mr. Fitzflint's conversation, who sat next me, nor for that matter was it much inferior to that of Mr. Fagge's other guests. Altogether, it could not be considered of the very highest order of intellectual recreation. I did not therefore take notes of it next day; but the evening added to my list of personal friends, Mr. Fitzflint of the Light Infantry, on leave at the Presidency, and resident in the South Barracks.

I called on Mr. Fitzflint the next day, and found him only three rooms off. He was lying upon his back smoking, and just as I entered, he called out:

"Qui hie? (who's there?) Where is my tiger?"

After the usual salutations had been gone through, he called out again:

“Qui hie? Where is my tiger?”

A small boy, of European extraction, was introduced by the “bearer” or body-servant in waiting, with the air that one would assume if producing a great rarity for inspection.

“Excuse me, Mr. Walford, for transacting business before you; but this is of some consequence: I am fitting up a tiger.”

“Pray go on! I would not interrupt you on any account: I have a great opinion of tigers—what breed is yours of? I take some interest in points of natural history, inclusive of tigers.”

“Well, my man, who is your father?” (interrogating the small boy.)

“Got no father, sir!”

“You had one, I suppose: most people have,” continued Mr. Fitzflint.

“Yes, sir: so mother says, sir. No. 98 of the 3rd Company, sir, Spike, sir, was his name. Mother married again, sir—that is, sir, three times, or maybe four since father died, sir; and I sometimes forget, sir, which of mother’s husbands was my father, sir; for mother, sir, was married twice before she married father, sir!”

“Well! that’s coming it rather strong in the matrimonial line. Has your mother any engagements in that way still to come off, Master Spike?”

“Yes, sir; three deep, sir. Serjeant Cary, sir, and Lance-Corporal O’Shaughnessy, sir, and the Fife-Major, sir!”

“Keep a good tally, Master Spike, or you may lose your reckoning; but “Spike” is a smart name, and may be worth four rupees a-month.”

“So mother says, sir; and that it’s all the estate father left, sir; and not to squander it, sir; for it’s all I have to live upon, sir.”

“Well, Spike, I engage you at four rupees.”

“Thank you kindly, sir.” (*Exit Spike.*)

Mr. Fitzflint had some peculiarities, some of which were suited, and some not suited, to the light infantry. He was a more shrewd person than he at first seemed to be, and was up to innumerable small things quite unknown to common every-day men of his grade. These were suited to the light infantry; but he was very indolent, and, as he himself said, was “a steamer; and smoked and steamed all day.” He consequently passed a large portion of his time upon his back, looking up towards the ceiling: these were not suited to the light infantry.

“I say, Fitzflint,” said a subaltern friend, suddenly breaking into the room, and quite at home in doing so, “would you have any objection to part with that round shot at the foot of your stretcher?” And whilst waiting for an answer, he commenced whistling the most monotonous combination of notes, which he called a tune.

“Couldn’t, couldn’t, my dear fellow, upon any account; that round shot saves me keeping a ‘bearer.’ Perhaps you didn’t know it; but just look here.”

And without moving from his favourite position, he slipped his right arm over the side of the bedstead, and touched the shot, as if accustomed to it; then swinging his shot-loaded hand several times to and fro, as if gathering impetus, he said:

“When my bearer is out of the way, which he often is, and when any visitor like you comes in suddenly and forgets to shut the door after him, as you have just done, instead of uncivilly intimating the omission, I just do so ——”

As the word "so" was uttered, and prolonged somewhat emphatically, the shot left Mr. Fitzflint's right hand, and rolled on towards the door, which was ajar, and effectually closed it with something of a snap.

"My dozen of claret is gone," said the intruder; "you are really a close-fisted fellow, Fitzflint."

There was a tittering outside the door, as if persons were watching.

"I'll come and help you to drink it," said Mr. Fitzflint. "Don't forget to give us due notice, and I'll bring Mr. Walford along with me."

The loser of the claret returned to his friends somewhat crest-fallen, trying to take up his tune at the point at which he had left off, but rather in a lower key.

"So you have been purchasing 'Lions and Unicorns,' Mr. Walford."

"I believe that Mr. Soapheimwell Planter has been doing so for me."

"I have just been selling. You know the old saying, 'What's one man's meat is another man's poison.'"

"I have heard it before, I believe: how do you assign them in the present instance?"

"Every man knows his own affairs best, you know. How do you like Fagge? isn't he a trump? I am much indebted to Fagge—a capital hand at giving one a hint—a wrinkle—a——"

"Just so; I can give you another proverb in lieu of your *saw*."

"What is it?" asked Mr. Fitzflint.

"A nod is as good as a wink to a blind horse."

"Precisely so; there cannot be a doubt of it."

I did not prolong my visit to Mr. Fitzflint, who, although in general a very knowing fellow, had overstepped the bounds of prudence on the present occa-

sion. I got into a palanquin, and hurried to the business part of Calcutta, and the public-room of the "Lions and Unicorns." Native clerks were in abundance and muslins. I looked out for a white face, and found one.

"I wish to know what dividend was declared yesterday? I am a shareholder."

"Four and a half, sir."

"It was six and two-thirds last half year, I think. Perhaps you have made a mistake?"

"No mistake at all, sir. And if you knew what I know, you would be very glad to get that."

"And pray what do you, a clerk, know, that I, a shareholder, have not a right to know?" said I, raising my voice so as to be heard by the numerous individuals around.

"Be pleased to speak a little lower, sir; these are business matters."

"Sir! the business matters are mine, and I have no secrets. Give my card to the manager, instantly!"

"The manager is engaged at a meeting of directors."

"So much the better. Put my card upon the directors' table: I will take no refusal."

My voice was too loud to be agreeable, and promised to increase in power; and in a few minutes I was ushered into the directors' room, where some fifteen gentlemen, of great status, sat round a green-clothed table; some of them looked aghast at my intrusion."

"Gentlemen, your clerk tells me, that if I knew all that he knows, I should be well satisfied with a dividend of four and a half per cent. for last half year. I come to be informed what that clerk knows, which I, a shareholder, have no right to know."

"Will you favour us with your name, sir; and the amount of stock you represent?" said the manager.

"My name is Walford; I am a very late purchaser; but one share is as good as a hundred in conferring a right to investigate."

The manager busied himself in turning over the leaves of a book, after consulting which, he said:

"Mr. Walford, your purchase is not completed; the transference has not been effected; until it is, we can answer no questions and submit to no intrusion."

"Then I shall call to-morrow at noon, by which time that formality may be completed. Good morning, gentlemen."

On arriving at my quarters, I sat down to a directors' table of my own, and decided eventually that there was something wrong with the "Lions and the Unicorns." Another of *my* directors got up and stated, that there was "something rotten in the state of Denmark." A third director thought of, and proposed consulting, Fitzflint. A fourth got upon his legs, and said *that* was "all gammon." A fifth reminded me of Mr. Flashington Fagge's capacity for giving hints. A sixth at this did "Snooks," and ten-fingered from the tip of his nose; and thus valuable suggestions were hurried upon me, until a whole court of directors had spoken in turn and out of turn, but quite in a business-like way. I merely give the cream of their advice; their speeches were too lengthy to report here: but it was midnight before *my* court of directors broke up, deciding on a preliminary interview with Mr. Soaphimwell Planter."

Next morning, at the business hour of eleven, I once more took the road to the city; it was the hour at which I knew Mr. Soaphimwell Planter turned his desk-key.

"Mr. Walford," said that gentleman, "two days ago I purchased into the 'Lions and Unicorns' on

your account, for one-twenty-five; and this morning I have received a letter from the secretary declining to make the transference, but assigning no reason for such unusual conduct. You must raise an action at common law for non-fulfilment of a bargain. I cannot tell you how annoyed I am about it."

"Would you favour me with a perusal of the letter, Mr. Soaphimwell Planter?"

"With great pleasure, Mr. Walford; it is *your property*, in fact."

I thanked Mr. Soaphimwell Planter, and glanced over the letter, the terms of which were as stated by that gentleman.

"Of course you will raise an action, Mr. Walford?"

"By no means, Mr. Soaphimwell Planter: I have really no such intention; and I beg you will not indulge in any regrets upon the subject. I shall take the liberty of retaining the secretary's letter, which you acknowledge to be *my property*, and you will oblige me by not purchasing into anything on my account."

"Really, Mr. Walford, your conduct seems most unaccountable; but, to say nothing in respect to its bearing as regards myself, what will Mr. Fitzflint say? the shares are his."

"The secretary to the 'Lions and Unicorns' must explain the matter to Mr. Fitzflint. I hope it will be satisfactory, as it is to me. Good morning, Mr. Soaphimwell Planter."

I had scarcely reached my own quarters, when the bearer in attendance announced the approach of a visitor; and Mr. Flashington Fagge entered rather unceremoniously, indeed hurriedly.

"Dr. Walford, you will not, perhaps, be astonished, when I tell you that you are no gentleman."

"Oh, indeed! perhaps not; are you one, Mr. Fagge?"

"Certainly, sir!"

"There being no resemblance between us in any respect, of course I can have no pretension to the title."

"Sir, Mr. Fitzflint will put a bullet through you; he is the crack shot of the army!"

"That would be exceedingly kind and attentive of Mr. Fitzflint; but it requires two, or no duello, and in sooth I have no vocation that way. Indeed, I have a dislike to it upon a principle, a vulgar principle, it may be, but a failing of mine; I call it an *innocent failing*."

There happened to be some loose articles about, for my servants had been packing; and, among others, were stray instruments that were being oiled. I took up a pair of long forceps, partly to look at them and partly instinctively.

"Dr. Walford! you are afraid of Fitzflint. You are—a—coward, if—you——"

As he uttered these words, half hesitatingly, and which I was partly prepared for, I dexterously placed the open forceps on his nose, and secured the grip. I had complete command over him. He roared out for mercy, for the attempt at rescue with his hands was followed by a pinch—such a pinch! I began to entertain fears that the nasal member might not hold out against the pressure of circumstances. There were noises at the door. I led him to it and into the passage, where officers' domestics were waiting in numbers. When I had got him to the head of the staircase, which was in six-step squares, I said:

"Now, sir! retract the word 'coward,' or I shall wrench your nose off!"

"I *do*—I *do* retract! I *do*, Dr. Walford! I *do*—*do*—*do*——"

I then bestowed a parting gratuity, which, considering everything, was perhaps a superfluous indulgence on my part. He took the first six steps in consequence "at a single mouthful."

"Mr. Fitzflint will shoot you for this, and I will be his second," screamed Mr. Flashington Fagge. His hands, as he continued downwards, were individually engaged in very dissimilar quarters. I turned towards my apartments rather flushed; the exercise was, if anything, heating. I ordered my bearers to cease further arrangements for my departure, for something told me that I had done for myself that which the old gentleman of the stable had refused to do, namely, *cancelled my appointment*. And thinking that this late occurrence might render it advisable to have any little trifles concluded, I sat down to my desk and wrote until midnight, with the energy of a penny-a-liner; for with such a character as had been given to Mr. Fitzflint, I thought he might, perhaps, take a potshot at me through the key-hole.

CHAPTER XV.

THE MANILLA HAT.

ON the following day it was intimated to me that Mr. Fagge had commenced law proceedings against me for assault, which it was by no means difficult to prove; and he succeeded in proving it over and over again by the testimony of innumerable native witnesses. Had these not been sufficient, his nose might have helped him out, affording as it did a proof impression of the fray, in mezzotinto, fitting a certain pair of forceps with a nicety that delighted the legal men on both sides. It was wonderful how much they made out of that. I employed excellent counsel, who all thought they could bring me through as long as the coin, which had given cause for these difficulties, lasted, at which epoch their opinion oscillated, and ultimately became hopeless as to success. I invested every farthing in law, a very safe investment, and I had no difficulty about the dirty dross thereafter. Then came Courts of Enquiry, during which the "Lions and Unicorns," "Soaphimwell Planter and Co.," Flashington Fagge, Esquire, and Lieutenant Fitzflint, performed parts of

some mercantile interest. The latter took to his investment again, locked up his pistols, and retired from the service with some signs of precipitancy; and in virtue of the assault upon Mr. Flashington Fagge's nasal organ, poor Wilmington Walford was also suspended from rank, pay, and allowances, for the space of two years.* I have had an utter dislike to that prominent, useful, and highly ornamental feature ever since, and rightly look upon the invasion of it as a most extravagant recreation, and not to be indulged in on any account. The funds saved from the maws of the "Lions and Unicorns," were all assimilated in the stomachs of the lawyers; there was a large balance against me which I could not pay, and I had to part with every valuable to satisfy their hunger. The law has rarely fine feelings on these matters: *my* chip of it was coarse in the grain,—mill-grit.

I might have had sympathy from various quarters, but mine was not the heart to revive under that which bears the vesicating memory of dependence. I buried my wrong, and burrowed obscurely, throwing myself in no friends' way.

I contented myself with a memorial to the Honourable the Court of Directors, and forwarded it to the secretary to the Supreme Government of India, setting forth therein my case, simply and truthfully. It was a long time before I even knew that it had reached the eye of "His Excellency the Governor General of India."

Returning homewards one morning, about three months after these occurrences, from my usual (now pedestrian) matutinal exercise, I overtook a rawboned

* The serious results here alluded to, it is scarcely necessary to say, are fictitious, and assumed as a means of introducing some passages in the autobiography of another.

gentleman, bedight in habiliments of very plain cut, and capped in a hat of Manilla grass, which, sombrero-like, flapped in his face. I conjectured that I had fallen in with the skipper of a China trader, or a branch pilot off duty, for this is a favorite wear with seafaring gentlemen in tropical climates. As I was about to pass this pedestrian, my attention was arrested by finding myself an object of curiosity to him, and in turn *my* interest was roused by the gentleman's features being not altogether strange to me. Where I had seen him I could not tell. In stature, perhaps six feet, his figure was rendered repulsively gaunt by the loose and shaky manner in which both upper and lower limbs were set on. His bilious complexion bespoke him undermined in health by a tropical sojourn, as indeed his hollow cheeks abundantly confirmed; yet physical ailment had failed in subduing the searching faculty of his keen grey eye, formed for distinguishing at a glance the character of those it rested on. As I was about to pass on without further notice, the pedestrian touched his hat and smilingly said:

"Good morning, Dr. Walford; you are known to me: I have seen you before, but it is scarcely necessary to remind you where, or how I come now to intrude upon you."

"Sir, you have the advantage of me in memory. I presume our meeting was not in my present lodgings."

"You are right in that point, but with your permission, I will join you in the remaining portion of your morning exercise?"

I bowed, but perhaps with some little confusion, at the awkward position in which I found myself; the bilious gentleman caught up my pace with as much precision as if he had been "No. 98 of the 3rd Company." I was quite unable to guess the cause of

interest which could lead him to recognize me, and I could not recall our former meeting.

"Dr. Walford, excuse me for not introducing myself; names are of little consequence, professions are of greater import. I am in virtue of the latter a politician on rather a large scale, by study a philosopher, by intention a philanthropist."

"The letter P is a great favourite with you, sir: you employ it in a rare sense in this country," I replied, rather drily.

"It is much needed, I fear me; but what points, in your opinion, call for the exercise of either in this Eastern Empire. I like to listen to unbiassed opinions?"

"Sir, the present is a crisis in the history of this mighty empire. He at the helm of state is working hard—may it be for the weal of the land. But the opinions of men are divided: if you are a politician, you can, mayhap, read them; if you are a philosopher, you will not divulge them to me; if you are a philanthropist, you will act as an honest man in the two former callings."

"Dr. Walford! you are both cautious and caustic."

"I have lately been at a school in which I have learnt both."

"Ah, yes; true. I think I know where you have graduated, but excuse me for intruding on you. I like a straightforward answer, even if but a cold response. I have been somewhat accustomed to mealy-mouthing, and have not found it to be always good advice; but you asserted a truth when you said a crisis is at hand."

"Men revile measures because they are personal sufferers; others would applaud the very same moves upon the chess-board of nations."

"True, Dr. Walford; true! and the man who com-

mands to-day before one party, may play a different piece to-morrow, when the bystanders are changed."

"The press is scurrilous, and pampered by parties; and lives by vituperating measures of improvement."

"Dr. Walford, go on: we agree in some points. The native communities, what think you of them?"

"That Hindoo, Moslem, and Eurasian are as yet too sparingly informed on these subjects, to hazard their opinions as the thoughts of their several classes. The last is the fittest to judge impartially."

"They have the heaviest stake indeed, at issue. Have you any idea what *they* think of the reduction in the army's strength?"

"That the measure is fraught with ultimate, if not with immediate danger, to the British rule in the East."

"And what may be Dr. Walford's idea upon that point?"

"Excuse me, sir, but I have formed none, at least none that would be of any service to you, who doubtless have studied the subject."

"I should like to have it, nevertheless!"

"Nay, to be plain, you have an advantage in knowing me, whilst you are not known to me in turn; 'tis scarcely prudent to bandy opinions with those we know not."

"We might happen to be agreed in these, Dr. Walford!" exclaimed my companion, biting his lip impatiently, as if unaccustomed to be thwarted. In an instant he was himself again.

"You are right, Dr. Walford. I was to blame; I approve your caution. Believe me there was no snare laid for you; perhaps I may have the luck to meet with you another morning."

He called to a set of palanquin bearers at a corner, who rushed to be hired, and they quickly bore the

owner of the Manilla hat out of sight. I struggled to recall our former meeting, but fruitlessly.

In a few months I gradually found the accompaniments of poverty telling on my spirits and appearance. My little purse, the saved from the wreck, became daily more attenuated—it was not the season for surgeon-bearing ships, or I might have hoped for one of these vacancies. I could think of no other mode of employment, and it would have gladdened me to get it. I had to wait, however, for there were none to be had.

At length my landlord looked very coldly upon me; instinct told him that my means were dying out; but he, poor fellow, had little of his own. He was an obscure Eurasian; I learnt something of this class from him. I paid him to my last coin; there was just one over, and having parted with all my moveables to obtain that, I had only myself to transport elsewhere. I went.

CHAPTER XVI.

PAINS AND PUNCH-HOUSES.

BEHOLD me then, badly off, turned adrift in the wide world, and seemingly at the mercy of chance, an ever indifferent and trustless guide. But He who watcheth the falling sparrow, could never think of forgetting me. The money in my pocket would not jingle, for only one rupee remained; and it requires two coins of whatever value, to make even the smallest noise. It was a hot, muggy, and stifling night, in which even Calcutta vegetation is ranker than usual, growing by inches: in which the rice, if minutely watched, may be *seen* to grow, as if possessing a consciousness that the rivers are rising, and vegetative speed is in requisition to save the precious ear; in which the air loses its oxygen; in which there is no breathing; in which the sky is covered with a huge awning of night, to ward off rain that otherwise would fall in sheets. As I entered the "bazaar," leading to the vortex of the "Black town," Hindoos grinned at me—your Hindoo is a great despiser of poverty in a white man. White habiliments all mud-bedraggled, and hanging in damp folds, are

not convenient for walking exercise in "the rains," so I scarcely wondered at the sneers of the Hindoo. I almost felt inclined, in joke (a queer moment for joking no doubt) to try Brahminical nature, by soliciting alms from the fat merchant over the way: not with the view of accepting it, but of trying his heart strings; and years afterwards, I regretted that I had not, when I saved the life of an only son of a Hindoo worth many annual thousands, and had several daily journeys of five miles, to see my little patient, who wore a necklace of emeralds and rubies. The grateful father sent a fee, watered by the tears of joy that he had shed; *a pot of raspberry jam!* I should have preferred the jam-pot without the tears, and therefore returned it to gladden the Hindoo's sight, with five rupees found to him again.

A party of European seamen, intoxicated and noisy, and careless, as they always are when let loose in a seaport, staggered out of a punch-house or drinking-shop, clearing the thoroughfare of all natives; who, with a caution the result of experience, fled before them into open doorways. They took me for a deserting cuddly servant, and one of them placing his hand within his breast-pocket, produced a handful of coarse Chinsurah cheroots, and forced them upon me. He would take no refusal, and insisted upon knowing what ship I belonged to. I answered the "Vicissitude," and he followed his shipmates, apparently well pleased with the name. As soon as he had gone, I entered the punch-house. Two steps, and descending these, led me into a low, damp apartment, lighted in the further and darker end by a couple of "chirags," or earthenware lamps, stuck in niches in the wall. The superintendant or proprietor of this low establishment was reckoning up his profits on the late customers; he was

intent thereon, for half looking up, he resumed his calculation. I waited patiently; it was of no moment attending to me: a white man who used his own limbs for purposes of locomotion, was undeserving of it. A Mussalchie or link-boy, in dirtiest Mussulman garb, lingered beside the proprietor, as if in waiting upon him. At length the European concluded his reckoning, and probably to an unusual degree of satisfaction; for on looking up, he demanded my business in a civil tone. I had almost forgot civility of tone; it sounded strangely now; men can accustom themselves to anything.

I wanted lodging for the night, and told him so enquiringly, and as I did so, I placed my only rupee upon the table. To my great wonder, he returned me half of it; and looking at me somewhat curiously, he directed the Mussalchie to conduct me to an apartment. Drunken sailors were wont to lodge there for the night. My request put no one about; what did for them, might do for me; I was hourly becoming less squeamish upon such points.

The proprietor seemed defective in his knowledge of Asiatic tongues. I argued from this, that he had not resided for any length of time in Calcutta. New comers are more open in heart; they become hardened as they mix with Asiatics; but for this, I might not have lodged there. The link-boy led me into an apartment, some steps lower than the last, and in virtue of this descent, damper. The *steam of Calcutta* trickled down the walls, which were picked out with irregular masses of mildew; and groves of little fungi vegetated and absolutely thrived in green and yellow, with very little light to feed upon, and this in a clime where sunshine abounds more than in most places.

Placing the bamboo stand, on which the earthen-

lamp rested, beside the wreck of a charpoy or cord-laced bedstead of the meanest construction, and with all the supporters or legs twisted at variance with the perpendicular, the link-boy left me to my thoughts; having, however, added more mustard oil to the earthen lamp—let it burn! I lighted one of the seaman's cheroots, and threw myself down to court slumber in tobacco smoke; but I was too miserable to do it early. I smoked on; one led to another; I was still awake; but the narcotizing weed still lasted, and the mustard oil had not gone out. The tilchitta or cockroach, with its brown glazed wings and long feelers, crept over me as swiftly as a sunbeam through a chink, now and then becoming suddenly entrapped in the lengthy mazes of my neglected hair; or, whizzing from the dark end of the apartment, attracted by the light upon my white clothing, he struck me with a click like the snapping of a little gun-lock. The night advanced, and the bazaar becoming gradually deserted, quiet resumed the place of murmur; the rat of the drains left its noisome quarters, and entered the dwellings of men—an expedition contraband in daylight. He came with companions, and visited *me* in this cellared room; whisked up and down the supporters of the charpoy, and to and fro upon the floor; pursued his companions with strange excited eyes, which now and then alighted on me, sharp as the edge of fractured diamonds. One, more sprightly even than the rest, ventured to creep up the damp leg of my pantaloons. Until now, I looked on, peering as curiously at them as they at me; but I shook off this inquisitive fellow with a shudder. They absolutely became familiar; they were jolly rats—at least they looked uncommonly happy, and I was very miserable. But I cared not for rats; I had spent nights with them in bungalows, that

otherwise appeared comfortable. I knew what the rats of a transport were, on occasions when fresh water was hoarded; and when they rambled about the live-long night in search of it; rushing up the hatchways to the steerage-deck, thence to the gun-deck, and up the poop ladders; bent on a visit to the hencoops. We were friends therefore, and recognised each other, for we were much more on an equality than hitherto we had been; the liberty taken with my trousers-leg shewed how this equality had been productive of fraternity.

I drew in tobacco-smoke lavishly; it had lost its narcotizing power; it fell far short of *that*, but it soothed me somewhat; at that time I was a great smoker. At length I fell into a murky slumber, but roused for an instant by the dying stump charring my lip as it dropped from it. The tenor of my sleeping moments was as difficult to support as my waking reality; but I *must* have slept—I had afterwards good reason to know that I did. My dreams were blent with loud talkings, bringing stifled replies; they failed to rouse me, for nature was exhausted, and even drew repose from such a couch as mine. But these noises ceased somewhat, and then I slept more deeply; they recurred however from time to time, and at length I was sensible that others besides myself were in the apartment. A glance satisfied me that the landlord of the punch-house had introduced a friend.

“Is he the man we want, Backwater?” and the speaker turned towards the landlord, shewing me the person of a European of immense stature, with blue grizzly beard and whiskers, on a ruddy countenance, but expressive of ferocity. He was habited partly like a seaman, but here and there some portion of his

dress bespoke a more lengthened residence on shore than men of his class usually indulge in when regularly sea-going. The contour of the man and his "getting up" bespoke a lawless character: his portrait was a good advertisement. I only wondered that he held no weapon of greater danger than an earthen chirag, such as that which had lighted me to my slumber, and then gone out.

Irritable in nerve from these trials, I marked over strongly the question put to Backwater: the English prints were just then filled with murders, done for the gain which the dead body of a human being would bring. A medical college I knew had been established in Calcutta, and the possibility of murder supplying their tables of science, made me feel faint. I feigned sleep, but a bright glare and a sense of heat close to my face, tried me, for it was close, very close, and I believe singed my hair, for the odour of such a process spread abroad.

"Come along, Walter! I fear he will not suit you," said the landlord of the punch-house, as they turned to leave.

Wearied nature demanded sleep, and now it came irresistibly, and the sun had been many hours in the sky before I awoke. Shaking off the inclination for a further indulgence, I passed into the anterior apartment, about to seek the ghaut of some tank, where I might bathe, and thus recruit myself. Backwater was there already, and to my surprise, requested me to lodge with him so long as it might be agreeable. He spoke with hesitation, which did not escape me, and he looked me in the face, as if to ask a question which he was fearful of putting. Again I turned towards the street, and as my foot was on threshold, he said:

“Mr. Walford! do you remember me? I was steward on board the ‘Bamboozlebury;’” and he tendered me the coin I had given him on the previous night.

I soon recalled him to my memory. He had been much struck during his visit of the previous night on recognizing me, for he had not learnt of my misfortunes. I had been affable to him in the “Bamboozlebury,” and it had not been thrown away. He seemed desirous of being serviceable to me in my present condition, in which he unreservedly expressed his astonishment to find me: I passed out, telling him I should return. A handful of dates purchased at a bazaar stand, where flies and hornets held a revelry, formed a morning meal, the more convenient as it could be discussed while walking. I sought the river side, far above the foreign shipping, where native sea-going craft are moored in the “nullas” or lesser tributaries. A plunge into one of these refreshed me wondrously, and having resumed my habiliments of long-cloth, stained by the mud of the previous evening’s walk, I sat down upon a wooden jetty projecting into the Hooghly. A prospect of starvation was not far distant; this is an alternative which few men can submit to becomingly. I am no philosopher on an empty stomach; it goes against my notion of things.

Calcutta is well worth seeing by moonlight. It was my favourite time for threading its mazes; I would take a twig to keep off sneaking jackals and mangey pariah dogs, just about the hour when syces, or horse-keepers, have drawn their charpoys* out into the open air. The streets of Calcutta are then a great bed-chamber, and groups of “cahars” or palanquin bearers, are squatted beside their ever-hireable conveyances, all clamorous over the earnings of the day, except him

* Bedsteads.

whose turn it is to smoke the hookah of a simple coconut shell, the joint-stock property of that humble company. Something crossed my path, and I threw my stick; it was a good shot, and tumbled over a huge bandicoot rat, an old fellow with a pig-hide and a few bristles at intervals upon him; the drains of the city were swarming with his fellows. I passed through Tank Square, and close by a gay edifice; in days when British enterprise was early in the East, the noted "black hole" of Calcutta stood there. I turned to the left by Government House, then to the right again, and was straightway on the river's edge, by Baboo's Ghaut. I counted a tier of frigate-built Indiamen, in one great chain of links, down, down, down to Garden Reach, their taunt royals far into the sky. Cheerful lights were twinkling through open ports. Just opposite, a great ship floated deep in the water, with straight lines and frigate run, her streak of copper no larger than a crown's breadth above the surface. Her sails were bent, and tucked up in neat bundles on the yards, just where they crossed the masts. A "dip," slight indeed, by the head, detracted a little from her beauty, and told that she was riding "hove short with ten fathoms," and ready for sea. A still finer specimen of naval architecture rode ahead of her, with half her cargo on board; she had fifty fathoms of chain to give her grace in floating, and a broad foot of copper glistened along her ample sides.

I turned up the river side. A French tar was singing a stave of Béranger, as cheerily as if on a *quai* of Havre or Bordeaux. On, on, and a wilderness of shipping occupied the river; by degrees the class of vessels dwindling to the native *dhonie*, the lowest specimen of a sea-going craft. On the land side, handsome buildings at length gave place to paltry flat-roofed

streets, intermixed with others of wattlework and thatch. We must persevere, however, a little further, for the contrast will repay us, nor mind the increasing smoke, which by-the-by savours strongly of cooking, such as a white man's nasal membrane fails to appreciate. Nations differ in cookery more than in politics. Come, we won't turn back. We will do our best to keep down our rising gorge, for it were a pity to return without taking a peep into the gaunt building at the water's edge. It has a doorway without a door towards the land, and is entirely open on its river aspect; there is no roof upon it, and smoke and oily odour load the air around with animal principle, empyreumatised from its reeking bosom. That building is the "Kali ghaut," where the dead of a great city are converted into ashes.

I entered the enclosure. It felt greasy under foot—the shoe-leather revolted at it. A bright fire was heaped up in one corner, and three Hindoos were urging it to burn. A heap of wood newly lit, and from dampness giving out nothing but smoke, was in another corner; a few dying embers which had already done their work, occupied a third space. The inner walls were clad mourningly in a garb of oily soot. The attendant natives laughed and talked; one would have thought that no one could have laughed there. The flame cast over these men an unnatural glare of a fiend-like character. The bright fire fell a little, as if its greatest strength had been spent, and the head of a man issued from a bright cavern, hissing, and blistering, and dripping. Anon, the charred wood crumbled a little more, and I almost thought the dead turned writhingly. A band of vultures stalked along impatiently on the wall above, at an hour when day birds ought to roost, but the feathered race are accustomed

to late dinner hours at the "Kali ghaut." With a clucking, chuckling noise, these birds looked wistfully on, with feathers staring and unpruned. One foul bird pounced into the corner where the dying embers were, and poked his beak into the orbits of a skull, with an air quite epicurean; another followed this daring fellow, and purloined a rib; but it was too hot, for he dropped it again. He succeeded better in another attempt, and hied with it to the wall top, where he might enjoy it with a prospect. These birds will be late in roosting—their carnival will last till day-break, at the first indication of which they will give it up to the Calcutta crow, a bird that can polish a bone skilfully. Lank and sneaking dogs hang about, and all but the crow has a look of degradation. Attributes like these might well render burning the dead unpopular. I returned homeward by the same road; I feared the wilderness of the native portion of Calcutta: there was no knowing what might be met with there.

Few Europeans know anything of the native portion of great Indian cities, although they may live for months and years in their vicinity. I was, however, in circumstances which led me to know Calcutta. I have taken more than one stroll on a moonlit eve; I shall bestir myself now upon a darksome, after the sun has gone down beyond Chinsurah. I marked the huge bat as he fled from the west, and the noisy rook as he sought it. The chirrup of the grasshopper and the tiny bell of the beetle arose from the soft turf of the esplanade as I crossed, removed from "the Mall," which I had no vocation for. I wandered into the labyrinth of streets between Chowringhee and "Circular Road." Insensibly, I became so bewildered in the mazes of the locality, that I knew not how to turn. An open doorway of some place, better lighted up than others,

attracted my attention at this critical moment. I soon saw heads of people, and heard the voice of a speaker addressing them; and a question or two to those near the doorway gave me the information that a "padre-sahib," or missionary, was offering to the benighted Hindoo "glad tidings."

I pressed my way through the crowd. With the exception of the bench nearest to the missionary, upon which I seated myself, the others were well occupied. The air of the apartment was heavy with odours; and before an audience oily and steamy, a pale, silvery-haired old man preached with great meekness and true anxiety for the weal of those he addressed. The missionary had become old in such works; but he raised his voice at times, as if with youthful strength given him specially. Those who listened to him were numerous, and unexceptionably youthful; and any Christian joining the assembly, as I did, might have thought the conversion of the Hindoo close at hand. Nevertheless, I soon learnt that the object of the listeners was to controvert the old man's sayings: the aged father who brought these messages was opposed by a subtle Hindoo boy, come of a disputative race, whose coolness and clearness in grasping an argument was exceedingly remarkable.

With unblushing countenance and stringent logic, the boy-disputant urged forward points which he called proofs of falsity, the power of which showed great talent; and ever and anon the cunningly-devised query came up to his lips, and he seized, with the acumen of a lawyer, the fitting time in which it might tell most.

I pitied the poor old missionary: with the keenest sense of the importance of the task imposed upon him, and with considerable command of the Bengalee lan-

guage, in which he disputed, he observed the cause he pleaded to suffer among that crowd; and under-tones complimented the Hindoo on his victory. But although the audience was Hindoo, contemners of the Christian creed, the most perfect order was preserved, and decency of behaviour and coolness of temper characterized the meeting; but an opportunity was that night afforded me of witnessing how a Moslem congregation would have treated the preacher.

Whilst the old man fervently and lavishly "threw pearls before swine," two young Moslems entered. They appeared to be link-boys or mussalchies, and had dirty, tawdry, tinsel-wrought skull-caps on their heads; and their long black locks hung wild upon their shoulders. They omitted not to leave off their cheroot smoking, and seated themselves familiarly enough on the same bench I occupied, and puffed away vigorously. All hearers of that word were, however, equal. I readily awarded it to the quiet Hindoo, who, although a disputer, was a becoming listener; but I could not do so to the smoking Moslem. The missionary, not heeding, said blandly: "For Zion's sake may we not hold our peace; for Jerusalem's sake may we not be silent, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth."

The unworthy followers of an impostor laughed derisively; and one standing up said, in good English:

"Come, old fellow! have done with that, and give us your stave about the Trinity!"

The missionary's face underwent a variety of painful expressions, which told how the sarcasm cut. I took the Moslem's arm, and led him out; his friend followed without any trouble. They turned their backs frowningly on the best of bread, and departed, grasping each

other's waists lovingly. Who can measure the feelings of the man whose life had been an exile in order to teach such as these? Vexatious tears sought the furrows on his cheek, which seemed at that moment as if they had been made by them. The missionary bowed in acknowledgment, and continued.

Hindustan is, I fear, but a barren field of missions. Whilst New Zealand has, in ten short years, been Christianized, the harvest of twice that time in India might be counted in grains. Years afterwards, and under better circumstances, I made the acquaintance of the missionary. I reminded him of the circumstance: he had not forgotten it. It had dwelt upon his memory as it did upon mine: but it was only one of many such mortifications he had met with. The Hindoo's is a stubborn heart: he will be the very last of all brought within the fold.

CHAPTER XVII.

MORE PAINS AND PUNCH-HOUSES.

BACKWATER was a Londoner; a little, active, pale-faced man, with very fair hair and eyes like a weazel, and had set up in his present mode of life about a year previously. I returned to his hospitality, and found him doing no small business in pandering to the appetites of European seamen. I asked him about the man whom he had addressed as "Walter," and who called occasionally; but he winced when I spoke of him. The very sinister expression of the latter did not wear off on further acquaintance; nor could I divest myself of the idea that his visit bore some relation to myself. But for the kindness of Backwater, who never would permit me to help him, my suspicions of this man would have caused me to seek shelter otherwise. Regarding him, Backwater gave no information; but it appeared that *he* also dreaded him; but he would come at times, and converse for hours in whispers. From stray whispers, I learnt that "Walter" had been a good deal on the African coast; that America and the West Indies were known well to him; and that much

of his life had been passed at sea. Nor would I, after this, have called him a seaman: he by no means associated with any of that class who frequented the punch-house.

Whilst compelled to take shelter in this man's house, I often thought over how to obtain a better way of earning my bread. The only way which presented any likelihood of success was, that of becoming surgeon to a trader. Until I had recruited my warbrobe, however, I kept the books for Backwater.

I had many visits to the Hooghly, seeking for captains of second-class traders, few of whom carried a surgeon on their ship's books. On these expeditions I hired the common dingy or wherry of the Hooghly. On one of many unsuccessful trips, a bank of clouds, that had arisen from the north-west, burst suddenly upon us. We sped before it; the river was strong, and we feared coming on some vessel's mooring chains, for then we should have tipped over; and then—ay, what then? We made many such misses; and sheets of foam covered the Hooghly. We were soon far down, and found it safer to creep towards the further shore. At length we pulled into a nullah or tributary, overshadowed by clumps of cocoa-nut palms. It was a lonely place, and made more apparently so by the dismantled hulk of a “dhonie,” or a native coasting brig, which was drawn up within it. There were no other craft of any kind to enliven the nullah. Desirous of waiting until the wind went down, I stepped on board the “dhonie;” and the boatmen pulled to the other side of the nullah, to enjoy their hookahs after their exertions. The “dhonie” looked as if it had been laid up for several rainy seasons; it was sadly in want of a coating of coal-tar. I paced the deck of the dhonie for awhile, as if I were the

captain; but I had no great wish to command such a craft. I saw the boatmen squatted on the further side, in a circle, passing their hookah round; and, knowing that the longer time I gave them the better pleased they would be, I continued my promenade. A deserted vessel is the most melancholy of ruins. At times, however, I thought I heard noises within decks; and when this idea had struck me several times, I stepped towards the after-hatch and tried to lift it. It yielded to my hand, and I entered the dhonie, descending with my face to the ladder; and found myself upon the second deck. I looked into the gloom, not expecting to see anything; but I was startled to observe a light through a broken chink in a bulk-head, situate, as I thought, very near amid-ship. As I advanced towards it, something must have been disturbed, for a noise, approaching to hissing, reached my ear for a moment. It conveyed an impression far from agreeable: it must have been a snake—snakes like such places. I placed my eye to the chink in the bulk-head, and saw, but not very clearly, into the lighted portion of the vessel. A brass lamp, on a high stand of the same metal, enabled me to do this. A Brahmin, of the Gossain or Yogi caste, perfectly nude, and whose skin and tangled air were whitened with ashes, was engaged in reading a lengthy scroll or manuscript. At his side, and half coiled round him, was a well-lizard some three feet long, a reptile of drowsy habits, found in holes scooped out in the sides of wells which have become dry: they are found in Upper India: this must have been imported. The Gossain and the lizard were equally noiseless. An ape of large size, a bluish, grizzled fellow, such as are sometimes seen in battalions in the lower ranges of the mountains, sat upright, and with his arms folded,

as if waiting to know his master's pleasure. Whilst contemplating this extraordinary scene, I became sensible of a feeling of languor which stole over me, now and then approaching to nausea, and not altogether free from drowsiness and headache. The idea that the snake had bitten me passed momentarily through my mind. At this instant I must have leant heavily against this portion of the bulk-head. It was a door, and burst open; and I introduced myself most unexpectedly to the Gossain. He looked up from his reading, otherwise he moved not; but the ape flew to the door and closed it, turning the key of a padlock most dexterously. I continued to feel my senses becoming gradually impaired; they were some of the symptoms of poisoning by snake-poison. I was not sensible of having been bitten, nevertheless the idea pressed somewhat upon me. Circumstances had, however, combined to render me more reconciled than I might otherwise have been; but I was much struck with the indifference manifested by the Hindoo to my intrusion on his retirement. I think he did so for effect. It might have been; who knows? As my eye became accustomed to the apartment within the dhonie, I saw things more clearly.

At length the grim faquir, lavish in ashes, but deficient in sackcloth, left off his study; took a pair of clumsy round glass spectacles of native workmanship from the bridge of his nose, on which they had been taking an airing, and apparently laid himself out for domestic recreation. He addressed the ape, who turned his head on one side, as if bent on learning his master's wish.

"Hunnumanjee! bring out the 'gooru,'* and let him have his supper."

* The sexton.

The ape, thus spoken to, addressed himself unhesitatingly to his duty; he understood it better than some servants do. He took from the beam above a short batten of bamboo and repaired to a corner of the cabin, which I was not long in discovering that something owning life occupied. Whoever or whatever it was, the ape was trying to rouse him; and at length dragged him along the deck and within the scope of my vision. Whilst this was going on, the Gossain produced a strangely-shaped vessel, in which he busied himself mixing some articles of an edible quality. I could not make out of what these consisted, but I was soon aware that the dish was the calvarium or skull-cap of a human being. As he mixed these dainties, he kept an eye on Hunnymaun, who was bringing the gooru to his senses. Dragging would not do; the animal on whom the Gossain had quaintly bestowed the name which he expressed by the word "gooru," was of a very lethargic disposition. When attacked by the ape he only made a snap, and went to sleep again. He was now enjoying his nap quite close to me, and I found him to be an animal of the sloth species—a burrowing gentleman who had a taste for grave-yards, and whose carnivorous propensities were subject to suspicion; but he was a sloth, and his conscience was clear of cannibalism. The ape returned to his task, and kicked and cuffed, and dragged the gooru, on whose hide blows produced a most leaden sound, which bespoke a natural but strange insensibility to external objects.

"The gooru is too many for you, Hunnumanjee," exclaimed the Gossain with a laugh.

The ape seemed to understand the sarcasm implied, and, bestriding the gooru, he commenced operations anew by seizing the leathery flap of the animal's ear, and shewing his establishment of teeth, as if to exhibit

their efficiency. Previous to the experiment, he bestowed such a bite upon it as to extort a whole series of snaps from the jaws of the now partially excited animal. The gooru began to shew some vitality, and the ape, determined to keep up the advantage, repeated the operation several times, evading the snaps made at him with wonderful dexterity.

“Take the bamboo to him, Hunnumanjee ! he will soon become very humble.”

The ape knew his master's word perfectly, and instantly applied the bamboo to the head, shoulders, and hinder quarters of the gooru, which carried him at a slapping pace round the deck, snapping at every turn, the blows of the ape varying this sharp noise with a dull “thudding” sound. The Gossain laughed until the tears ran down his ash-begrimed countenance ; it was a hideous party. Hunnymaun's pluck was fairly up, and he determined to master the gooru. Even the sleepy lizard at the Gossain's side took an interest in the affair ; for he turned himself more than once and rubbed his tail upon his master's elbow. At length the lethargic gooru, having passed from a state of inaction into a state of excitement, appeared to be fairly exhausted by the contest, after which the ape brought him submissively to the feet of the Gossain. A bite upon the ear caused him to snap, whereupon the faquir, taking advantage of the animal's jaws being open, poked a bit of the viands into them. This was repeated at intervals of a few minutes, whereupon the Gossain exclaimed—

“Where is the ‘samp,’ Hunnumanjee?”

The ape, which apparently was so trained as to answer all domestic purposes save that of speaking, took from a crevice a primitive flageolet made of a bamboo stuck into a small cocoa-nut shell, and applying

it to his lips, made a humming see-saw sort of din, no bad imitation of that produced by the Hindu snake-charmers, and after a minute or two a hooded snake, or cobra di capello, squeezed himself through a small opening in the bulk-head by which I had entered, and shuffling along the deck danced round the "gooru," as if to entertain him between each mouthful. The ape and the snake were perfect at their duties, the gooru was only in training. The prompt appearance of the snake did not tend much to dissipate the sense of nausea and prostration which I felt during this scene increasing upon me; a feeling which, however, exerted some influence over that scene, in so far that it prevented me from expressing by words or actions the astonishment that I was full of. The Gossain and his trained friends, from such various classes of animal nature, seemed equally indifferent to me. Nevertheless I knew I was a prisoner—there could be no doubt on that head.

When the Gossain had stuffed a sufficient quantity of food into his protégé the gooru, the latter went to sleep upon the spot, with a boa-constrictor sort of temperament, which by no means elevated him in my estimation as a tasteful object on which to lavish educational hours and minutes. The ape dragged him, in a perfect state of somnolence, to one side, giving him a lunge, and a kick, and a bite in the ear, the latter this time having no effect. It was a parting gift—it was a legacy quite lost upon the gooru, in which hunger alone developed any activity, and that only when the hunger happened to be excessive, or combined with the condiment of a thrashing.

At this juncture I must have sunk into a complete state of insensibility, for I remember nothing that followed. I, however, passed the night there, and had

been indebted to the Gossain for my lodgings; but on awaking, I found myself stretched out at full length on a log of wood, one of many drawn up on the river bank just under the bastions of Fort William. How I came there I could not tell; but I supposed that with the turn of the tide, and before daybreak, the Gossain and his friend, Hunnymaun, had ferried me across. The morning gun sent its early warning almost over my head: had it been through it, it had in that case effectually cured a most overpowering headache, the fag-end of that which had conquered me in the Gossain's dwelling. Strange as this adventure of the previous evening had been, I felt no great inclination to relate it to Backwater on my return to the punch-house.

CHAPTER XVIII.

LA PELUSILLA.

I WAS not long in discovering that an air of mystery pervaded Backwater and his doings. His connection with Walter Horrebbon favoured this suspicion. But the punch-house keeper gave me gratuitous shelter, and always treated me with consideration. I hoped some day to be in a condition to repay him. I went and came without question, became quite cheerful and communicative with the rats at night, and by mutual consent we took fewer liberties with each other than we at first did. I hinted to Backwater that I suspected he had a secret, but I did so delicately, with a view to advise him for his good. There must have been a good heart within him—no one could tell that better than I could. My hint brought the colour to his face, already bloodless in general from the climate of Calcutta. I noticed an inclination to confide ; at length he said :

“Walter Horrebbon is a fearful man, Mr. Walford, I sometimes wish to speak of him to you. Will you excuse me, Mr. Walford, for lighting a cheroot whilst

you are smoking? it looks rather equalizing in me ; but is not meant to express that."

"Backwater, you have over and over again proved yourself incapable of any such advantage. Circumstances alter men's position sadly : you have endeavoured as much as lay in your power to make me insensible of such humiliation. Come, my friend, I may return you a service such as that you have so feelingly and nobly conferred upon me."

It was past midnight ; the visitors had departed, and we sought the housetop, and stretched ourselves upon it, for no rain had fallen that day. Backwater commenced his disclosure by some comments on religious subjects, and I wondered why he, the keeper of a drinking establishment, could be so interested in them. He evidently considered business and religion as distinct, no way involving each other. He intimated that he was a methodist, and readily confessed that he possessed a secret that weighed heavily on his mind, and by means no agreed with Methodism. He then drew out my opinions ; and although no Methodism pervaded them, he was not dissatisfied. At length he said—

"Mr. Walford ! I shall not be punctiliously squeamish ; but you are, I may say, under an obligation to me."

"Under an obligation that it will take much to repay ; pray go on."

"Then kneel down ; and upon this volume, and with your right hand held up, promise to advise me, and not betray me."

It was a small pocket Bible he had brought with him, and evidently with premeditation. I took the oath without hesitation. I had a debt to pay to Backwater, and I thought I saw my way towards its liquidation.

"Let us go towards the river," said Backwater.

The stars told us it was past midnight, and the moon

was rising, and already gave sufficient light to render the surrounding scene indistinctly visible. We reached the Hooghly just where a jetty juts into it, and opposite the Mint. Backwater passed along it, and looked out impatiently. There was a large vessel in the centre of the stream. Some little sign of duty being conducted on board of her came across the water, which ran down with great velocity. They were "heaving short," but her ground-tackle was of hemp, and made little noise. The huge vessel dropped slowly down; and after Backwater had ascertained that she did so, he stood upon the furthest beam of the jetty, and taking a bundle of papers, to which some heavy keys were attached, he swung the cord that tied them several times round his head. The momentum with which this was done carried the mass some fifty feet into the Hooghly.

"Let all that belongs to Walter Horrebon perish by the same element as himself. He is dead, Mr. Walford; that terrible man is dead. He was my foster-brother, son of my father's patron. This very evening he conveyed a cargo of living men on board of yonder ship, which drops down past us—they are kidnapped for the Mauritius plantations. From this jetty on which I now stand, I watched him leave that ship and meet his death. The dingee in which he was, took the tide-gage of that schooner just abeam of us; and in so doing touched her ground-chain. A yell of human beings passed over the water; I saw the countenance of Walter Horrebon, my foster-brother, above the swell of the Hooghly; and the shriek for mercy of one who had never shown it to his fellow-men arose from the eddies. Cry after cry came fainter and fainter as he dropped fast with the ebbing waters of the Hooghly—and an inward voice whispered that Walter Horrebon had gone to his account.

“It was a fearful position, Mr. Walford; to be daily the confidant of a man steeped in crime. He at times confessed to deeds which made me almost suspect him of anything; nevertheless, I felt that we were bound together by a tie which many deem stronger than absolute brotherhood—the gentleman’s son and the labourer’s were hushed to sleep on the same lap, and drained the same nourishment from her I wish I could now call mother. We parted, at length; he grew to manhood amid vice, squandered his patrimony, and became a wanderer: he had proved himself a reprobate in every way. An accidental circumstance led to our recognition: I found him as a foremast-man in my last ship; since then he has been my evil genius. May he find mercy!”

It appeared that Horrebon was a famous kidnapper, who had driven a flourishing trade for a couple of years by catering for the Mauritius planters; for this was the era of the Slave Emancipation. The system of dealing in “coolies” was profitably conducted for two or three years, under some of the horrors of the African Coast trade. That which for a time was illegally carried on, and by persons of the lowest grade, ultimately became a traffic recognised by law, and was superintended by officials with responsibility.

Backwater and I turned homewards, but we took the open road by the ghauts, or landing-places—the moon now gave fuller light. As we gained Chaudpaul ghaut we lingered for a moment. A boat was rapidly pulling from a very beautiful vessel of small tonnage, moored some fifty yards off. That boat was pulled too firmly not to betray a hurried errand. Six lascars, or native seamen, urged it on, and it soon bumped slightly against the ghaut; but very slightly, for the man at the bow oar fended her off with a boat-

hook. The steersman leaped out: he was an officer of a ship of a special class and of a special trading. He enquired hurriedly where he could find a medical man. I put myself at his disposal; time was an object, and without further parley we pulled towards the brigantine.

In the centre of a beautiful stern cabin, which, at will, and by means of sliding doors, formed either one or two apartments, a fine young man lay, stretched upon a couch, covered with smooth but cool Manilla matting. A glance at his features assured me that cholera had seized another victim. The form which but two hours before had been that of Antinous, was now shrunk and clammy, and his eyes looked sinking in his head. His voice was husky, and his tongue cold and pale; yet he cried out for water, to quench his inward heat—the cry was but a whisper. I had heard many such—it was nothing new to me. I had tried all things in this disease, and felt much inclined to leave him to himself, for I had no superior authorities now hanging over me.

With an eye, however, to appearances, I sought the little medicine-chest belonging to the ship, and cast it over the stoppers. Many of the bottles were empty: I was not much disappointed. I hovered over them with much indecision; the lookers-on had evidently very little faith in me. At length I fixed upon a bottle on which was marked “Camphorated Tincture of Opium,” and once more was at my patient’s couch. I asked the steward for some loaf-sugar, and putting ten drops upon a little bit I placed it on the patient’s tongue. In ten minutes I repeated it. Before I had continued to repeat this for an hour, an improvement had manifested itself; the patient’s voice was returning, He felt it, for he thanked me. I felt surprised myself;

if it was the effects of the tincture it was a chance shot; I had given the same before in cases which turned out fatal. But I never left the patient until daybreak brought the morning-gun; and finding him improving I was contented, and did nothing else.

In these latitudes dawn is quickly followed by sunrise. My patient was becoming drowsy, and I sought the bracing air of that hour upon deck. I had been so much on salt water that I always felt at home upon a quarter-deck. The beauty of the vessel surprised me; a smart little Frenchman lay within a biscuit's throw, but, compared with that I was on board of, the Frenchman looked like a canal barge. Backwater requested to be put ashore, and I accompanied him to the ghaut, in order to view the vessel from the water; it did not occupy ten minutes, and I previously assured myself that my patient slept calmly. We pulled under her stern: upon it, in small letters of bronze metal, and consequently indistinct, were the words "La Pelusilla." To please me the men pulled ahead; the current surged a foot's length up her cutwater, and then glistened on her copper as the rising sun's rays lit upon them. She lay like a black streak in the water: no ports glared along her sides. She was fully freighted, yet half a foot of copper was seen. No outward ornament looked bright about her. A fairy figure-head—a sylph-like female figure—perfectly white, and sharply moulded, dipped a little to the tide. Her stern was a little bevelled off at the quarter galleries, showing more distinctly the breadth of beam, which was very unusual. Carved flowers, convolvuli and wild poppies, also moulded in bronze metal, and here and there showing open work, at once attracted the attention of one not altogether unaccustomed to look on such things. I was again upon the deck of

this beautiful craft; it was flush from stem to stern, and unbroken almost, but by the companion, the capstan, and the combings of the hatchways. Her length and breadth had registered at Lloyd's some three hundred tons; she was now fully freighted with a hundred, but it was a golden cargo—packed in small space, and well cared for. It was opium. Her rig was that of a brigantine: masts of red pine of enormous girth; and her yards threw into the shade the spars of bulky ships around. The yellow fir planks of her decks were scarcely more than three inches broad, and a delicate thread-like seam alone showed the joining. The heads of the copper nails had been driven home, and a little diamond of ebony had been sunk into the wood, making for these nail heads little tombstones.

No brasswork flashed about the capstan or rudder-head, binnacle or steering-wheel, but the mahogany of which these were made was picked out with ebony and bird's-eye maple.

Six well-proportioned twelve-pounder guns, of bronze metal, and fitted with elevating screws of most approved construction, three on either side, were lashed fore and aft, so as to make room, and not give occasion to the ports being opened—they were intended for use, not for show. The standing and running rigging were all fitted with great nicety, and the sails clewed down as tightly and in as small bulk as the canvas of a royal cruiser. I stepped below, my patient slept like a child. I gazed upon him with much interest; the expression told me that the disease had passed away. He was a slender youth of twenty years, with a Grecian style of feature. His nose was even with his forehead, his short upper lip was curled up, as if to show its returning red; a

profusion of dark wavy hair, almost approaching to feminine, ran wild upon his temples. A coloured attendant, of Indo-Portuguese extraction, a boy of sixteen, stood over him, and drove off the mosquitoes with a "chowrie" of the tail of the mountain-cow of the Himalayas. Even this youth was worth observation, for a shawl of some little value was twisted round his head for a turban.

The vessel and all her appointments appeared to be a marvel. That half of the stern in which my patient lay was fitted with a couch, usually running fore and aft by the starboard quarter, but now drawn out into the centre, and the only bulky object. Telescopes, rifles, and nautical instrument cases formed not unbecoming ornaments on the bulkheads; two unusually ample stern windows gave abundance of light and air, each of which was filled by a single sheet of plate-glass. The fellow cabin on the larboard side, evidently in the possession of the same party, was fitted up with great elegance; the panellings of pure white (like the last, but, being less occupied, rather more easily seen) were carved sharply into delicate masses of creeping flowers; they were done in box-wood, the amateur work of my patient, as I afterwards found out. A rosewood cottage piano rested against the forward bulkhead, and little bookcases, of similar pattern, filled up the spaces between and on either side of the stern windows. The deck of both cabins was covered with cool Bengal matting, of the finest texture.

As I sat absorbed in wonder, the cabin-door was gently put aside—the ship's bell had struck eight bells a minute previously. A Portuguese steward requested my presence at the breakfast-table in the public cabin. Passing between two small private state-rooms on either

side, I reached the public cabin, which ran athwartships. A stream of fresh air rushed into it from a windsail, lowered through the centre portion of a skylight, which also ran athwartships. Within the shelter of this skylight, and on either side of the windsail, were two marine barometers, by celebrated makers. The mizen-mast passed down towards the kelson a couple of feet or so abaft the table; well polished carbines, cutlasses, and pistols surrounded it—not a bad armament for a crew of thirty men. Such was “*La Pelusilla*,” or “the Gossamer,” the most perfectly equipped craft I have ever seen.

Two, fine, frank, powerful young men, the first and second officers, did the honors of the table, and seemed much rejoiced at the escape of the commander. Ready for sea, they had delayed a day in consequence of his sudden illness. I stated my readiness to spend the day on board the brigantine, until I was more assured of my patient’s safety. He was no ordinary man: that I could not doubt.

A long, calm, life-inspiring slumber had stolen over “*La Pelusilla*’s” commander, from which he awoke towards sunset with a good voice, and a pulse quite restored. I was sitting by his couch, and a stray volume of “*Vittoria Colonna*” served to occupy me. I put aside the volume.

“Doctor, I fear I was fast drifting on a lee-shore, when you came to my assistance. I knew I was dragging my anchor, but you box-hauled me off in gallant style, and I think we have weathered the point, however threatening.”

Smiling at the nautical language in which he truthfully and characteristically expressed a knowledge of the condition he had been in, I begged to assure him he was once more “safe at his moorings.”

“But, Doctor, I must be at sea in forty-eight hours, and to insure that must cast off with the last of the ebb, and get below Coolie Bazaar. The first of the morning’s ebb will take us down to Diamond Harbour. Doctor, I must be at sea in forty-eight hours, or I lose the Lintin market by delay.”

I shook my head doubtingly, for I feared a relapse or an attack of fever from excessive reaction, a common occurrence. But a thought struck me: I must have put on air of reflection.

“What would you have, Doctor? ‘La Pelusilla’ is too expensive a mistress to keep at her moorings longer than is absolutely necessary, to say nothing of the market. What would you, I say again, good Doctor?”

“I would go to sea with you, if it be agreeable to you.”

At first a waggish expression of incredulity lighted up his countenance, but observing gravity on mine, he said: “You *shall* go to sea with me. There is more here than my thoughtlessness can compass in a moment: you *shall* go with me, nor shall you have cause to complain of any want of comfort or hospitality under the planking of the ‘little Spider-web.’”

Leaning over the couch, he pressed a button-headed piston-rod fitted into the bulk-head. A little hammer struck instantly upon a concave semi-sphere of bell-metal, which rang clearly, but only once. The noise elicited was strange; without disturbing others, it was a perfect summons. The shawl-turbaned attendant opened the cabin door.

“Give my compliments to Mr. Petley, and ask him to step down.”

Mr. Petley, the chief mate, was soon before us.

“Has the pilot come on board?”

“And has gone away again: he thought we should be delayed a tide or two,” responded the mate.

“Let him be sent for. We shall drop down to Garden Reach with the last of the ebb; and, Mr Petley, I wish the small cabin on the larboard side cleared out. Order the steward to have a cot swung: the Doctor here is going to take a cruise with us. We shall be glad of his company, and, Mr. Petley, you must make him comfortable.”

Mr. Petley touched his hat quite in a polished manner: the salute might have passed muster in Belgravia or Park Lane. I took immediate opportunity of making my position known to my patient. He saw through it in a moment, for my court-martial had been animadverted on in the public prints. He shook my hand warmly, and said:

“Doctor Walford! a boat’s crew will put you on shore in a few minutes, and as we shall unmoor as soon as the Government pilot comes on board, make good use of your time: get your traps in hand and join us again by midnight. We shall bring-up at Garden Reach; you shall sail with me as my friend, and the longer the better I shall like it.”

Again the little hammer struck piercingly upon the semi-globe, and the turban forthwith half filled up the doorway.

“My compliments to Mr. Petley, and I shall feel obliged if he will have a boat’s crew piped away. Dr. Walford is going ashore.”

In five minutes more I was on the ghaut. Night was just closing in.

CHAPTER XIX.

YO-HI-VO !

ON repairing to the punch-house, Backwater seemed much gratified at the opportunity which had cast up of my gaining professional employment, for I intended acting as a non-paid surgeon to the opium trader. He had quite recovered his spirits, and was moving about briskly : a load had been taken off his mind by the fate of Horrebon. A very short time was sufficient for my arrangements. I bade Backwater adieu, and a couple of "coolies" soon conveyed a teak-wood chest, I could now call mine, to the ghaut again. The "dingee wallas" there, waiting for fares, made a rush at me : two of them succeeded in bearing me in triumph to their shallop, whilst two others succeeded equally well with my chest, the only drawback being, that we were in different "dingees." The latter, however, gave in to the former, and we pushed into the stream to gain the middle water ; the flood had set-in alongshore.

We dropped slowly down with the last of the ebb, and passing the villas of Garden Reach soon descried the taunt tracery of the opium-trader. She had been

moulded and copper-bolted in the far-famed building yards of Baltimore, and she did no discredit to her transatlantic origin. She had been captured full of slaves in the Mozambique, after a bloody fight. The serang or native boatswain hailed us from the larboard cathead as we dropped alongside. The second officer examined us from the quarter. Duly ascertaining that my patient was once more sleeping calmly, I sought my little cabin. A swinging cot of snow-white canvass, covered with cool Manilla matting, was already slung, and without undressing I threw myself upon it, and slept instantly. Morpheus was somewhat in my debt; he paid it off that night with scrupulous exactness.

But I was too much excited in nerve to be deeply overpowered by the drowsy god, and a noise such as is very casual on board of any vessel awoke me. The moon was just rising: the foliage of the trees on either side caught its light, but the river was still in darkness. A grating noise again took place; it was immediately under the scuttle of my cabin, but the scuttle was too small to admit my head. By a little coaxing, however, I succeeded in this: a small "dingee" was alongside: one native, of short stature, was busily engaged in handing small square packages into the scuttle of the cabin next to mine—it was Mr. Petley's. Another native sat at the steering-oar. This last was counting money, for now and then he clinked a coin against his teeth to try its quality. At length this was over, the dingee dropped silently astern, and just then the moon-beam reached the water for the first time, and, as the dingee passed within its influence, I recognised the Gossain steering, and the ape Hunnymaun tugging manfully at the oars. I remembered my drowsiness in the dhonie: it was a store of smuggled opium.

Whilst in the river the opium-trader was in charge

of the Government pilot; all hands busy with the ebb tides and drowsy with the flood. The commander kept his cabin at my request; the pilot alone was responsible for the ship and her cargo. We made good use of the ebb next morning. As we passed the James and Mary sand, the upper spars of a ship appeared above the water. A large vessel on our starboard was passing over the tail of the bank within a biscuit's throw of us: her ports were all shut in, and the leadsman in the chains was plying his line earnestly.

"How that ship stirs up the mud!" muttered our pilot: "she has six inches less water than she draws, and takes it out in mud."

From the pilot I learnt something more of "La Pelusilla" and her interesting commander. He had gone through a midshipman's career in a frigate, and afterwards in an African cruiser on the coast. On passing as a mate he was appointed to the Cape station. Whilst cruising in the Mozambique Channel, one morning, soon after dawn, but with a calm sea and a buttermilky haze over it, the young mate was the first to descry "La Pelusilla" broad upon their beam. In a few minutes the boats were in pursuit, the command of the expedition having been kindly conferred on the youthful mate: success would insure him his epaulettes, and *they* had been slow in coming, considering that he was the son of a British admiral. But they were hotly received: the young mate in scaling the slaver's side got knocked on the head, and when he came to himself he found that his boat had drawn off, and dead and wounded men were in her bottom. No promotion could follow this, so he went at her again, and took the brigantine, but with heavy loss. A prize crew was put on board, and under command of our hero she was sent to Simon's Bay. The admiral, anxious to

give promotion, sent him on to St. Helena, there to land the slaves, and with orders to proceed to England with his prize: rather an unusual course.

On presenting himself at the Admiralty, he was very politely received. The First Lord, who had never been at sea otherwise than in the capacity of a passenger, thought that taking slaves was great-babies' play, and merited no promotion. He was quite sure he could take a few every morning if he were on the coast, and, but for the point of etiquette, he would not mind trying it. The disappointed officer retired, knowing well there was no promotion this bout. He meditated on the cause of this. His old father the Admiral had either got into the "black book," or the "Lords" were displeased at having the slaver thrown upon their hands. But rather unadvisedly, on the following day, he tendered his resignation of the Royal service, which was accepted *as a favour*.

It happened, however, that the decease of a near relative had made our hero undisputed master of ten thousand pounds, a piece of good luck he only became acquainted with on his arrival. At a loss how to employ himself or his money, he chanced to cast his eye over the advertisements in the "Times," and therein the Lords of the Admiralty had notified the sale, by public auction, of the Spanish slaving prize "La Pelusilla." The youthful seaman knew her qualities, that her beam and keel would make her register too much at Lloyd's for any merchant's speculation, and her former repute would make her unpopular as a yacht; he argued, therefore, that she would go for a small figure in arithmetic. For the bidding of a thousand pounds, the youth became master of her. He had formed his plan of procedure, and most of his friends thought he was a madman. Friends are some-

times apt to think so. He was somewhat lavish in his ornamental work; the bronze mouldings and guns walked off with a little cash no doubt, for the romance of salt-water hung heavy on our hero. But his plans had been laid to invest his capital in the opium-trade, which at that time was a gold mine. He ran her out to Calcutta in eighty days, discharged her European crew of twenty men, and shipped forty picked lascars, bought his own opium at the Government sales, and sold it to Chinese for ingots of silver, paid down upon the capstan-head. Always first in the market, for his craft beat every other, and he cared nothing for spars, he had already made three trips, each averaging two months, and cleared, after all expenses paid, a thousand pounds a trip. These were dashing exploits for a youth: the Admiralty would have done well to have given him his promotion.

The second day's ebb brought us to Kedgeree, and the third, to the outer light beyond the Gaspar sands. A pilot-brig hove-to, and the pilot duly placed the brigantine under the command of her youthful owner, who now, for the first time, appeared on deck. Any weakness of character which Captain Sydney might possess, was shown in an attachment to personal effect. A blue silk jacket with velvet cuffs and collar thrown back, was carelessly becoming; little buttons chained together in twos, and of unalloyed gold, dangled at equal distances. A little straw hat such as a sailor boy might wear, half covered curly jet locks; and sundry other points showed attention to such details. As the pilot and his servant went over the side, the former with a bank check in his pocket, the crew of the Government brig gave three cheers, "La Pelusilla's" yards were filled, and with as much wind as was pleasant for an overmasted craft, we soon increased our distance; Captain Sydney was in buoyant spirits.

“Isn’t she a lovely little lady?” said he, as he went below to examine his chart once more. In a few minutes, a hand ran rapidly over the keys of a piano, and a manly voice, well managed, followed the accompaniment.

Once more on the true wave,
My gallant craft speeds cheerily,
And deep through the blue wave,
A watery moon wades wearily;
My spars are tracing out the sky,
The weather shrouds are straining tightly,
But more ! ay, more ! there is an eye
That for my coming sparkles brightly.

Once more on the true wave,
I hear the boatswain’s whistle calling,
And far o’er the blue wave,
The shadows of the night are falling.
The flashing foam is hurrying by,
The snowy canvas gleaming sprightly,
But more ! ay, more ! there is an eye
That for my coming sparkles brightly.

Once more on the true wave,
To beating hearts we fast are gliding,
And far o’er the blue wave,
The stormy peterel is riding;
My masts are bending now on high,
My keel divides each billow lightly,
But more ! ay, more ! there is an eye
That for my coming sparkles brightly.

I listened to the lyric with considerable interest: the merit lay in the music, and in the careless rapid style in which the trifle was thrown off at such a time. Another moment, and the seaman was on deck again.

CHAPTER XX.

THE CRUISE.

WE hugged the Coromandel coast rather closely, working it up in a fishbony style, until, getting into the latitude of Cape Comorin, we laid our course towards the Straits of Malacca. We overhauled many a smart craft. "La Pelusilla's" spars were lithe and strong as bamboos still growing in the jungle clump. On a fine day dawn, we found ourselves becalmed near the small islands of Pudo Rondo and Pudo Brasso; Acheen Head, the northern point of Sumatra, rising bluff upon our starboard tack. Patches of water were visible in several directions, which seemed agitated, as if a wind blew specially for them, and not for us; but the agitation was the result of currents or tides—it had a strange effect. Now and then we drifted into one of these ripples, and looked at least to be doing great things; it was all sham, we were doing nothing. On the calm spaces, we looked as lazy as we were; the water was alive with sea-snakes. We wished for wind were it only to get clear of them, for they occasionally tried to board us by the soil-pipes.

But it is not always calm, even on the coast of

Sumatra. A breeze sprang up, and the "little Spider's Web," as the skipper was often pleased to call her, closed with the Malacca passage rapidly; we kept our course and with a point to spare upon the compass card. A merchantman of heavy tonnage was some three half leagues ahead of us. She held her course, and that was all: the brigantine lay a point closer than she did. In a very few minutes we were sensible of speedily overhauling the merchantman, who ran his colours up, and the "Union Jack" blew out from his peak. Another and another piece of bunting followed, which asked us in semaphoric parlance:—

"What ship's that?"

"Bend on the Spanish bunting, Mr. Petley; we have some of the Don in us no doubt!"

As the Spanish flag unfolded itself, the youthful skipper kept his glass upon the trader, and a smile passed over his countenance. The rub-a-dub of a brass drum reached us distinctly—it had only a mile of water to pass over.

"We have too much of the piratical cut in our jib to be very pleasant to that half-manned lumbering ship. She is beating to quarters: send half the watch below, and let the other half lie down in the weather scuppers."

"Ay, ay, sir!"

"And, Mr. Leitch! oblige me by heaving the log:" it was hove accordingly.

"Nine, all but, sir," responded the second mate, as the serang or native boatswain spun the dripping line upon the reel.

"I must have the nine complete, Mr. Leitch: take an extra pull on your lee braces."

In five minutes more, the log was hove again, and Mr. Leitch reported that "nine *was* on the line." On

board the merchantman, consternation prevailed. They had got a small fire-engine upon deck, and were soaking their canvas up to the royals.

“With the “little Thistledown” under us, we might do a very good business in the piratical line, Dr. Walford! We have but bad reputation with those on board that clumsy ship, and I fear we shall interfere with the nerves of the ladies, and the digestion of the gentlemen. Spread out a yellow bunting, and see if you can lay your hands on a black piece, and send aft the sailmaker.”

A temporary “death’s head and cross-bones” was soon made up, and in a minute it replaced the colours of the Spaniard. A terrible hurry-scurry pervaded the decks of the merchantman; rusty carronades were hastily run out, and the brass drum nearly split itself with drumming. Red articles of clothing showed the presence of military passengers. Three or four cracked instruments struck up “Rule Britannia,” but the attempt proved a failure—the players showed a partiality towards quavers.

“Send the steward aft, Mr. Leitch!”

The steward was a Portuguese of colour, and touched his hat to the quarter-deck.

“Gomez! have as good a dinner on the table for a dozen as you possibly can at four bells, and put a dozen of champagne into the weather-chains to get the air about it. I think, Mr. Leitch, we shall lose the breeze soon, and the tide will fail us at least an hour before that time.”

We had got to windward of the merchantman; and were right abeam of her when she suddenly went about on the larboard tack, just as a fighting ship would do to rake another. She passed quite close, and the mouths of her carronades looked pointed in all directions; the

ominous flag was struck, and the light-hearted skipper, standing on the taffrail, put his trumpet to his mouth.

"We have struck to your gallantry, Captain Ropeyarn. Come on board with your friends, at four bells, and take possession of your prize; we shall bring up when the tide fails us."

That evening was a merry one on board the brigantine. Captain Ropeyarn readily forgave the joke that had been put upon him on the "high seas," and brought a round dozen of passengers to fight the dozen of champagne. The champagne suffered first, the passengers suffered afterwards; female fingers now struck the piano in the little drawing-room cabin. The brigantine lay as if in a duck-pond. Captain Ropeyarn was roasted a little, but he bore it well under occasional buttering.

"Half a minute more and I should have raked you with a whole broadside," laughingly exclaimed Captain Ropeyarn.

And we had no reason to doubt his intention, for old Ropeyarn had been a midshipman in Dance's fleet, when the gallant Commodore led his lumbering tea-laden Indiamen into action, and pitted himself against an admiral of France, not leaving a single ship to the disappointed Linois: Ropeyarn's reputation was therefore dear to him.

"You might have cut some of the threads of the 'Spider's web' had you done so; we shall be more careful of you for the future."

It was midnight before Captain Sydney's charmed but astonished guests were pulling towards the merchantman, and most of them were deeply slumbering, when, with the turning tide at dawn, the vessel got under weigh. By noon the royals of the merchantman had faded far astern.

We beat up the China seas beautifully. "La Pelusilla" passed everything that could sail. As we ran between the rocky headlands, known as the jaws of the "Tiger's mouth," Captain Sydney swept the basin within it with his telescope. The usual smile upon his countenance was succeeded by an air of disappointment.

"The frigate must have started on a cruise—cheu ! cheu !"

The opium trade, in which "La Pelusilla" was taking such a successful part, had gained its culminating point as a mercantile speculation. A great Government, presided over by European heads, encouraged the growth of a poison, and monopolized the growing of it. A semi-barbarian Government, alive to the degradation overtaking its people, tried to bring an antidote with one hand, and a counter-antidote with the other. The great men of China were ordered to suppress it, but at the same time *most of these great men used opium*. The difficulties arising from such a condition of matters were just then only beginning to be felt; it was the hey-day of opium. To bring such an enterprise to a happy termination required capital, energy, and daring;—a swift boat, and a man who could handle her; and who expended his upper spars freely in the monsoons; who could take a hurricane calmly, and had no great regard for the stomach of a Chinaman.

"La Pelusilla" anchored at Lintin, the usual roadstead for opium-traders, the Chinese right of search not as yet extending up to this limit. To a certain point dealing in the drug was smuggling; a hair's breadth beyond it and the purchaser came boldly on board, knowing that the mandarin above him smokes opium, and cannot live without it, and that mandarin

well knowing that he can prove the use of the drug through every grade upwards to the Emperor, "brother to the sun and moon," who, probably, is particularly partial to it.

"La Pelusilla's" hatchway was opened; the smuggling boat was already alongside. The smuggler-in-chief, after some exertion, rather detracting from his dignity, reached the quarter-deck in a blue satin pea-coat or polka, ornamented on the reverse with the sprawling resemblance of a dragon, or a great sea serpent; and with a tremendous longitude of tail, the glory of a Chinaman, who cannot be convinced that it is a most dangerous appendage, for nothing is easier than to capsize a Celestial through its instrumentality. Bargaining for opium is easy traffic, the drug being as intrinsic in value as gold or silver. Bars of silver termed "sycee," were handed upon deck, and submitted to the scale with equal minuteness as the drug. Sycee is, however, an awkward coin, occasionally requiring adjustment by the hammer and the chisel; but it is a pleasant thing to weigh them, if they are your own.

It has a curious effect to see gold and silver piled up in squares, no more thought of than if they were pig iron, or rails for a branch of the "Glenmutchkin" line. These lascars might crib a bar, and it would never be missed. Let one try it, and see how soon "John Chinaman" will be upon his trail. If you want change he will chop you off a corner from an ingot with chisel and mallet, a wonderfully close approach to the required weight.

"Walford," whispered Captain Sydney, "we are doing a snug piece of business this trip. We have the first of the market; the "little Thistledown" will be ready for sea again before a single clipper shows her

royals off the "Tiger's mouth." These Celestials have among them tailors of wonderful capacity in their special department of art; make good use of your time and set up a new wardrobe, and order it down to the ship's account.

The hint was well-timed, for I stood somewhat in need of it. There was nothing to make a sensible man squeamish upon that point. Captain Sydney took much interest in such a matter, and had he got his own way entirely would have overdone the thing up to a point of complete oppression. But it would be tedious to dwell upon this. The Buckmasters of China are clever fellows, at least in the copying department, if not in the inventive. If a patch is upon the elbow or knee of an old pattern, a patch uncommonly like it must necessarily go upon the new, maugre strict orders to the contrary.

The country through which the Canton river flows is not badly delineated upon a certain pattern of table ware in vogue at English tables where the families dine at two o'clock. I admit that in the latter the perspective is somewhat trying, and the shade of blue occasionally too profound for the climate of that individual locality. The fault of these representations is, they are *too* true; the Chinese artist insists upon your seeing everything, and seeing it well; the subject in the background must be brought for especial inspection; in a marine view they will draw every rope in a ship a league off, because they know that the rope is there, although invisible to him who sees the hull. It is on the same principle as the patch upon the elbow. The ten-storied towers could not be better limned, nor the broken-backed bridges represented more engineeringly than many a man in England finds them on his dinner plate. We have all our knowledge of China from this

same dinner-plate system of instruction, and after all it is only the infant-school system adapted retrogressively to adults.

Some English ships of large tonnage, the rotting limbs of the East India Company's mercantile marine, were drowsily moored at Whampoa, and leave to parties of the seamen was occasionally given. These were, by Chinese proclamation, ordered to confine their trip to the river's bank, and the immediate neighbourhood of the foreign factories outside the city. Jack would, however, now and then take a peep within the city walls, especially if backed by a few comrades and a certain modicum of rum.

I had sallied out on such an expedition of discovery. Captain Sydney being engaged at the factory, I thought that, unnoticed, I might take a peep within the city. Just as I entered, a party of seaman were retreating upon the factories, which they considered an intrenched camp; they were beset by five hundred Chinamen, all bamboo armed. The tars, five in number, bravely kept their faces to the foe, making, as they did so, a laughing job of it, occasionally flooring an over-bold Chinaman, irrespective of his relationship to the "sun and moon." Anon, a Celestial having exposed his tail, a seaman would request his nearest messmate to "belay that," and "run it out," and away spun the owner with most undignified speed. From this incident, and strictly in conformity with the laws of induction, I inferred that five English tars are almost a match for five hundred cousins of the "sun and moon" in various degrees removed.

Not deeming it absolutely necessary for the honour of old Albion to take part in the quarrel before me, and not unmindful of the fact that a share of bambooning might be awarded me out of consideration to my

colour, I stepped aside into a dealer's in ivory work, for I had a commission from Captain Sydney to make purchases on his account. So, after an hour's work there, I contrived to invest a moderate five hundred dollars in fans and snuff-boxes, but particularly in an article of great beauty but wonderful little use, wherein sundry hollow spheres, gradually diminishing in size, are contained one within another. This ingenious toy has not been successfully imitated in Europe. One wonders how they could be got out, but more still how they ever got in. I have over and over again looked at it earnestly, but never got nearer a solution by one jot.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE PHRAOS.

“LA PELUSILLA’S” anchor had only been down a week, when the order was given to weigh it again. Winged like an albatross, she bowled before a favourable breeze; scarcely starting a tack or a sheet, until we weathered the capes, and stood into the roadstead of Singapore. We then hauled by the wind, and beat up towards the anchorage. As we did so, the skipper’s countenance suddenly brightened; it had been dull before. The pilot was on board, and Captain Sydney had leisure. The telescope seldom left his eye; it was directed long and earnestly to a fifty-gun ship; and satisfied of her identity, he left the deck, and soon reappeared in fresh costume, fit for a ball-room. On making the last board, he again took command.

“Are all hands at their stations, Mr. Petley?”

“Ay, ay, Sir!”

“Have all ready to let go!”

Just as we got abreast of the frigate he called out, “Let go everything!”

In an instant the square sails were flapping on the

caps, and men were hurrying aloft to furl them; the fore and aft sails were in the brails; and, the anchor running out the chain like lightning, the brigantine's head turned to the tide, in a moment as motionless as her gigantic neighbour.

"Not badly done, Mr. Petley! we have still a little of the service about us; pipe away a gig's crew. Come, Dr. Walford, the frigate is an old friend of mine; let us go on board, and enquire what news are on the gun-room table."

We were soon in the stern sheets of the gig, eight stout lascars impelling us. The skipper held the rudder-lines, and a couple of minutes brought us under the double-galleried stern of the frigate. The lower stern ports were open, and the notes of a piano-accompaniment to the words,

"But more! ay more! there is an eye
That for thy coming sparkles brightly,"

reached us distinctly. My eye sought the countenance of our steersman. There was a slight blush upon it, but he swept us suddenly under the frigate's counter, and in a few seconds we saluted "Her Majesty's quarter-deck."

The officers of the gun-room were enjoying a chat over a glass of wine; and several of them recognised Captain Sydney with brotherly good feeling, as old messmates are wont to do on such occasions. One of them had been a midshipman in the boats which took "La Pelusilla." He had upon his shoulder the epaulette that he in command had vainly fought for.

After half an hour's conversation, the gun-room steward was requested by Captain Sydney, to convey his compliments to the commodore and ladies, and to request permission to pay his respects to them. The permission came duly, and Captain Sydney took im-

mediate advantage of it. Captain Sydney, the commodore and the ladies, were by no means strangers to each other; and a smile passed round the gun-room table, as Captain Sydney left his seat vacant. The officer with the very new epaulette sighed distinctly, and then looked as ferocious as a hyæna; which having been observed by those around, a rather smart burst of merriment followed; and the young lieutenant looked very pea-greenish, a sentimentalism somewhat allowable within "soundings."

In half an hour or so, Captain Sydney once more occupied his chair at the gun-room table.

"You have a pretty boat under you when you pace that brigantine's quarter-deck, Sydney! I think I would barter my chance of being posted, to have such a command."

"The 'Spider's Web' is a fleet craft," responded the commander of the opium-trader, in a fit of abstraction: "but I hear the clank of her chain already, and I'll wager Mr. Petley has her topsails loose."

"Ay, Sydney! ladies' chains are imperative bonds, whatever their topsails may be."

But Captain Sydney had lost all heart for bantering, and in a very few minutes we were in the gig, and pulling once more under the frigate's counter; a female figure sat at a lower stern port, but the cabin was not lighted; as we passed under it, and just cleared the enormous rudder, she leant half over it, and said in a low tone:

"God speed you, Sidney!"

"And you, sweet Edith!"

In a few minutes more, we were ascending the side of the opium-trader. The sun had set, and the short period of twilight of that latitude was just sufficient to enable us to get under weigh. The brigantine's top-

sails were already set; a few more turns of the capstan, and the anchor was run up to her bows and "catted," and under this easy canvas, the light-heeled craft was running before a gentle evening breeze.

The creeks and islands so frequent in the coast of the Malacca peninsula have from the earliest periods of our acquaintance with them, been haunted by the most cruel and daring freebooters on the water, that any country has ever produced. The princes of the country are well known to participate in the profits of these desperadoes; in lieu of which bribery an indemnification is granted them. These piratical bands pursue their calling in boats of great length, adapted for speed, and specially built for coasting in shallow water. Carrying many men, and propelled with equal facility by oar or sail, these *phraos*, as they are called, issue suddenly from their lurking-places; and not easily seen at night, strike at the becalmed and anchored ship, as the spider clutches his prey; often with such stealth, that they have frequently been known to gain the decks, and massacre the watch, ere those below had time to render assistance. Hundreds of missing vessels have found their fate in this way, in the Malacca seas; for in calms, which are frequent, vessels passing through the straits, must "tide it," bringing up with the change.

On the second evening after leaving Singapore, "La Pelusilla" brought up with the ebb. A clump of small islands were on our quarter, some two miles off, seeming at that distance to be dense masses of foliage; they looked larger than they really were, from a slight haze which spread over the water as the sun went down.

"This is not the very best neighbourhood, Mr. Petley, and the 'Spider's Web' has a side easily

mounted: rig out the nettings, and have the guns shotted, and a few boarding-pikes ready at hand!"

A sledge hammer was placed close to the chain shackle, that the bolt might be driven out at a moment's notice; the six bronze guns were loaded, three with shot, and the remaining with "grape" and "canister;" and a boarding-netting along the hammock-lines projected rather outwards, the entire length of the brigantine, starboard and larboard. The crew were piped to supper; and the watch set, which in a trader at anchor in the Indian seas, means, that the watch are stretched out on deck, ready to start up if summoned to duty. Captain Sydney and Mr. Petley paced the deck, and shewed no symptoms of retiring for the night; but both frequently swept the horizon with their night-glasses.

"Let no bells be struck when the watch is relieved, Mr. Petley; we must keep quiet to-night; these lascars are of no use at boarding-pike and pistol."

The officers of the opium-trader alone kept the watch that night; and several hours passed over undisturbed. At midnight, a single sigh of wind passed over "La Pelusilla's" deck; none other followed it; but for an instant it swept the haziness aside, and permitted each anxious watcher to dip into the obscurity of calm and mist. The effect was momentary, and all was haze again.

"There are whales near us," exclaimed Mr. Leitch, the second mate. "I saw several black backs above the water."

"If you have observed anything, you have seen Malay phraos. I have met with whales of all kinds, from the bottle-nose to the pure sperm, and I know that they *must* blow; and the 'blow' of a fish that can be seen at night, would reach our ears at a mile's

distance, in such a calm as this. They are Malay phraos, and are collecting around us; and arranging their plan of attack. Have you got a spring on your cable, Mr. Petley?"

"We have, Captain Sydney."

"Then rouse the serang, and let him muster his men. We shall need them to haul upon the spring; and not a whisper among them, Mr. Petley,—our lives are on it."

"Ay, ay, Sir!"

These precautions had been well thought of; without them "La Pelusilla's" career had ended as it began, in bloodshed. The lascars were roused and made aware of their danger. Familiar with the stories of rapine among the Malay buccaneers, they needed no assurance that stern action was called for. But Captain Sydney had no inclination to trust to them, and he knew that when hand to hand with the Malay, the lascar was little better than a coward. All that he expected from the native portion of his crew was seamanship, the fighting part he assigned to the four white men of whom he was the chief.

The "serang" or native boatswain stood at the chain-shackle, hammer in hand, and ready to drive out the bolt if necessity occurred for suddenly slipping anchor; the Europeans mustered by the guns; and the lascars held on by the spring-hawser. The suspense continued for a further space, when another gust of wind, more prolonged than the last, whistled through the cordage of the brigantine. The vapour on the water passed to leeward, and several long, low, and dark objects, were made out by the glasses a hundred fathoms or so upon our starboard quarter. They were attached to each other, and the foremost appeared to be anchored. All doubt was now at an end: we were the

object of piratical attack. They had evidently lost the trader's position in the haze, and were waiting leisurely for it to take off, for an immediate movement took place.

"They are rowing in a line stern to us," whispered Mr. Petley.

"Let the men run-in the hawser, Mr. Petley."

Away went the men willingly for a few steps, but they were soon brought up; not an inch more of the spring could be got in. Captain Sydney looked over the side.

"The tide is too strong; we shall never get her broadside to bear, and without wind there is no use in slipping. The brigantine must be taken; but let us give them a dear bargain;" and Captain Sydney, stepping lightly to the taffrail, raised a rifle to his shoulder and pulled the trigger.

The steersman of the leading "phrao" gave a shriek, and instantly fell overboard with a plunge which distinctly reached us. A few more shots from our small arms told well, but the "phraos" were seven in number and crowded with men. They pulled steadily towards us, stern-on, but the tide was strong and they had some difficulty in stemming it. They had made a mistake in getting to leeward of us, whilst in the haze.

The conductors of the "phraos" shewed skill in their manner of approach, and how to avoid a merchant ship's guns. No words can describe the feelings of those on board the opium-trader, whose beautiful armament was rendered useless by circumstances. Destiny seemed hanging a gloomy mantle over us, and most of us felt a cold sweat break out upon our brows: the creese of the Malay in prospect is an excellent diaphoretic. If any member of the profession will try it, I feel assured he will not be disappointed.

A few minutes sufficed for all this; yet, fleeting

as they were, and with the experience of fifty years, they were the most lingering I ever passed through; most of us lived years in that short space. The lascars had sought shelter below. The nearest "phrao" was within twenty fathoms of us, and gaining ground, for the tide was nearly expended. Again the captain looked over the side.

"Run that spanker up," he exclaimed.

All lending a willing hand, we ran it up a few yards; the skipper ran to the compass, and, instantaneously as it were, the phraos, which had been in our wake, were seen broad upon our beam; a sudden breath of wind had swung the brigantine round.

"Now, Mr. Petley, it is our turn. Our bronze ladies have an opportunity of speaking out: but we can only work one at a time. Let us first speak with a round shot."

Mr. Petley, who had been a master's mate at Navarino, spun round the elevating screw, and glanced his eye along the gun—then pulled the trigger.—The shot fulfilled its mission.—Crash! crash! crash! was heard as it passed through the three phraos in advance—there was a *mêlée* of confusion in the attempts to save two hundred swimmers. The second gun sent a charge of grape rattling among them, and then arose to the thick sombre sky the shrieks of wounded and drowning, which were now with the turning tide borne past us in struggling groups.

"Maro! strike!" shouted Captain Sydney to the *serang*, who, of the Asiatics, had alone kept the deck, and two blows of the hammer sent the shackle bolt jerking out of its socket, and the chain ran through the hawsehole. The brigantine, freed, dropped slowly with the tide; from her decks we could see nothing but water, half-stifled cries at intervals fitfully following us.

CHAPTER XXII.

HURRICANES AND HEARTACHES.

“THESE are uncertain seas, Walford,” exclaimed Captain Sydney; “let a man be in the chains, and let him tell us what water we have to swim in.”

The lead was kept at work till daybreak, when sail was crammed on the brigantine, and we worked through the passage without any further annoyance. A fair wind up the Bay of Bengal set us speedily northwards. At length we took a pilot at the outer light, and in another twenty-four hours we brought-up at Kedgerree, Saugor Island lying over against us, low, flat, and feathery; the barrier towards the sea of that leafy wilderness, the Sunderbunds, or tide-visited islands, where only at a point or two human beings dare to tarry. These are now becoming known through the agency of steam; for slow sailing craft cannot prudently trust themselves in that malignant labyrinth.

The upper division, less of a wilderness than the seaward section, is inhabited by a scanty and squalid population, remarkably short-lived; a characteristic increasing the nearer we approach to the sea, until the

last hovel of the Soondri cutter, surrounded by a small rice patch, tells him, passing hurriedly, that beyond this point none dare to settle. In the dry seasons, steamers make regular trips between Calcutta and the north-west, and weave many miles, up to several hundreds, of this watery network; entering by Channel Creek, and passing inside of Saugor Island. Every half-hour of the voyage a view of the sea may be obtained. Even a steamer threads these intricacies for two days and a half without a single human habitation being visible. There is not a spot for any to rest upon, for the tide flows over alluvial islands, and close jungle grows from brackish water. Occasionally, above the general mass a tree of immense size towers like a monarch; or, lightning-stricken from its exposed situation, and dead probably for many seasons, he stretches out his mottled, bark-denuded limbs like a great lord of the wilderness: livid disease revels there under a beautiful disguise.

From the Hooghly to where the Hurrungutta issues from the Ganges above Culna, fifty-two rivers are paddled over, the most remarkable of which is a snaky stream, so narrow that in threading its windings the stern-post touches one bank whilst the stem is hugging that opposite; a river euphoniously called the Koornkalikal.

“Walford,” said the Captain, “the barometer is falling, and I may be twenty-four hours here before a tug is available; you must be ship’s husband, and go up with the steamer of yonder vessel. I would go myself, but the weather looks threatening; pipe away a boat’s crew.”

Getting my China trunk hastily over the side, I was soon on the deck of a steamer-tug, which had a fifteen-hundred-ton ship bobbing at its tail. By evening we

reached Diamond Harbour, and the barometer still falling, the steamer, casting off in expectation that a coming gale would prevent any progress next day, carried on past the James and Mary sand, and on to Calcutta, which we reached next morning: the wind had increased to a hurricane.

As soon as the business hour arrived I hastened to the ship's agents, the customs department, and the "Bankshall," and delivered Captain Sydney's papers. From thence I hurried once more to the ghaut, but no steamers were going down the river, and not a beauliau's crew would venture. I had nothing, therefore, but to ride out the gale on dry land. The barometer fell further. "Captains of ships and pilots congregated at the "Bankshall," and the semaphore station; and the coming tide was not stayed at its wonted level, but crept up the tide-scales to an unusual point, and then spread far and wide over great provinces. The Indian Ocean had made an onslaught on them. Night was again closing in; the semaphores in consequence ceased working; what were the rising waters and the tearing typhoon doing during that darkness?

Having secured an apartment in a lodging-house, I bent my steps towards Backwater. I found him busy and apparently thriving. His countenance expressed extreme satisfaction, for he had been aware of the brigantine being reported in the river; but did not expect such an immediate advent on my part.

"Dr. Walford, I have news for you."

"Ah! letters, I suppose, Backwater?" for I had directed the post-office so to leave them.

He went to his desk, and took out a Calcutta newspaper, and, after picking out a special column that he already seemed familiar with, he read from the Government orders of the day:

“The Governor-General of India publishes the following extract from a letter (No. so-and-so) by the Honourable the Court of Directors:—

“‘We have to request that you will please to order that Assistant-Surgeon Wilmington Walford, M.D., suspended, be remanded to his duty in the Medical Department.’”

“You do not appear elated, Dr. Walford,” said Backwater, disappointed at my apathy.

“Stop, Backwater! to-morrow perhaps I shall be: but there is something weighs heavy on my breast this evening. Listen to the gale! there are brave hearts in danger. To-morrow, Backwater, I may be elated.”

Backwater stood awed—the spirit of the winds was abroad, a maniac, destroying all it encountered. Another tide, and the sea came in still stronger; ships struck their topmasts, and had all their anchors down. And hours and hours of a fearful night passed, and, when day dawned, crowds were at the semaphore, which now spoke freely of the desolation towards the seaboard.

“What of the old ‘York’?” said an anxious face.

“The old ‘York’ has just passed, on the top of a mighty surf, the lighthouse of Kedgere, which two days since stood upon dry ground, nor has stopped until carried three miles inland, among what had been rice-fields.”

“Thank God, the ‘York’ is safe!”

“What of the ‘Amherst’?”

“She is dragging her anchors, and firing minute-guns.”

“Any word of the ‘Sultan’?”

“It has been a fearful night on board the ‘Sultan.’

The 'Sultan's' hearts are all at rest. She went down at her chains before the great crash—she was too deep in the water."

"Is aught known of 'La Pelusilla?'"

"All is water where she floated yesterday. There is nothing known of 'La Pelusilla.'"

I turned from the semaphore station sick at heart; I was the only survivor of "La Pelusilla's" crew! Days passed over, but the sea never gave up her dead;—the ocean, which had burst the landward barriers, then retired, leaving miles of blackish residuum, that killed vegetation and gave out a pestilent air; and the fever of the swamp, in a concentrated form, took many away whom the flood had spared. The tiger crept awed into the wood-cutter's hut, offering no violence, but asking protection—the visitation had even tamed him. Many a weeper would not be comforted that day.

Previous to reporting myself, I sought an interview with the military secretary; and, on sending in my card, was admitted at once.

"Dr. Walford, I congratulate you," said the old Colonel. "I assure you no man can rejoice more than I do at your restoration. Your memorial has been graciously considered by the Honourable Court; there is to be a levée at Government House on muster-day, and you will allow me to present you? Indeed, I know that his Lordship took some interest in your case. You will breakfast with me on that day, and then to business."

I duly acknowledged the secretary's attention, and, careful of his time, I then reported myself at the usual quarters. The next general orders by the Commander-in-Chief reposted me to my old troop, now far in the north-west; and within half-an-hour from the time of

reading it, an army tailor came to remind me that I needed his assistance. What an eye these men give to external want. They say there is more science in tape than most men are aware of, for they seem to keep a look-out on most men's wardrobes.

Of all formal nuisances a levée is the greatest bore. On muster-day I was at the breakfast-board of the old Colonel, which groaned under tropical and European luxuries. There was a great waste of good meat thereat; but it was the custom, and could not be dispensed with. The Colonel's hookah kept bubbling jocosely at his left side, and his "kidmutgar," or butler, took care that no insect invaded his master's shining scalp. The Colonel was comfort, as it is within the tropics, personified; but it could not be expected to last for ever; and the Colonel at last laid aside his hookah, and took to his cocked-hat.

As we hurried up the ample steps at the viceregal palace, gay costumes flashed around, and the magnificence of natives of rank contrasted well with scarlet and gold of every device. The last presented, were backing out in the usual awkward way. I never could get over the idea, that at levées little traps were laid at regular intervals for spurs and highheeled boots to trip upon, a special order from the august individual receiving; and that he doubtless took great delight in the numerous false steps made on these occasions. As the Colonel approached to present me, the thoughts of how I should get back again completely occupied my advancing moments; and I was close to the Governor-General of India ere my mind reverted to the present.

"My Lord! allow me to present Dr. Walford to your Excellency?"

"I think I have seen Dr. Walford before. I am glad to see him on this occasion."

I bowed with some confusion; the owner of the Manilla hat, whom I had not been able to recall to memory, was addressing me. I shall not forget his countenance; I should know that again, I think, whatever I might do with the hat.

CHAPTER XXIII.

MOGUL MORSELS.

I COULD not have thought it possible that such a restoration to position and comfort, almost unlooked-for and most auspicious, could fail to bring along with it great joy, but yet it failed. There was a load upon my spirits, that shut out joy, and would not be shaken off. "La Pelusilla's" timbers lay scattered on the ocean, and her gallant commander had found his last home among its "coral caves and cells." All now known of her was, that she floated there no longer: she never cast up, and until the mighty sea gives up the dead it has taken, we shall know no more!

By this time steam communication had made some progress upon Eastern waters, and I availed myself of such a mode of transit to Allahabad, some four weeks' steam journey, intending thereafter to set up a marching establishment, and thus join my troop. It would be tedious to drag the reader over ground we have already travelled in each other's company, nor is

the novelty of a steam conveyance such as to render a repetition more inviting, Suffice it to say, that I arrived at the mouth of the Jumna in due time; at which place, finding the heat too intense for marching, I determined to pursue my way by "dak" or palanquin; the more so, since I had heard of the troop being ordered from Meerut to Delhi on sudden and urgent duty. Three or four days of close and constant carrying took me to Allighur, and two more enabled me to reach Delhi, where I found the troop encamped near the Cashmere gate, in company with a corps of light cavalry. They had been suddenly ordered over to strengthen the regular garrison during the trial and subsequent execution of a Moslem noble yclept Shumshudeen Khan, against whom the charge of vicariously murdering the assistant-resident, Mr. Fraser, had been brought. A commission was just sitting to investigate the circumstances. It was a very tedious business, and the quirks of the law were strangely shewn, and wondrously added to by a mixture of Moslem statutes.

But who was the Nawab Shumshudeen Khan? He was a Moslem of rank, and a great landholder; a young man, too, who had a great ambition to get more land. The assistant-resident had drawn upon himself the ill-will of this haughty Moslem. Accounts differ as to the real cause of this; some say that the Nawab charged Mr. Fraser with an unjust division of property; others, that features of a more romantic cast were scattered over the tale. Be that as it might, the Moslem said to himself, "The white man must die!" To this consummation he bent himself, putting the deed into another's hands, that of a sowar or native trooper in his service, for all natives of rank entertain such men. I was riding in company with a friend from our camp towards

the cantonments of the Delhi Brigade, taking a round-about and western approach towards it, winding amid earthy ravines, and ultimately creeping up the oblique face of a rocky ridge ; just before it does so, the road turns off at an angle to the left. Some babul trees margined the road ; at this moment my horse started at a crouching figure, miserable, and apparently gone there to die.

“That figure haunts this spot,” said my friend. “It was from these trees the trooper fired the shot that brought poor Frazer down ; and the parent of the murderer ‘sits derna,’* or has gone to die there. Like her of old, she is weeping for her son, and refusing to be comforted. Her son committed the deed ‘all in the way of business ;’ he was employed, and had great difficulty in seeing the criminality of it. By ‘sitting derna’ the old lady hopes to bring down curses on those who hanged her son, in her opinion so unjustly, for doing his duty by his master’s orders.”

The old woman lay like a heap, almost inanimate, and refused all food from the day her son suffered ; a few days more and her pilgrimage was at end. I became familiar with that clump of babul trees, from the frequent occasion I had to pass them ; recollection of the old woman haunted them still.

The very unusual circumstance of a man of high rank being indicted as a felon, produced unwonted commotion in the Moslem population of the great city of Delhi, the classic home of the Moguls, those men held as semi-fabulous in many English nurseries. The trial of Shumshudeen Khan at length followed several weeks of preparatory investigation, and occupied some

* A native of Hindostan, when unable to obtain redress for injuries real or supposed, will sit down by a man’s gate, and starve himself to death.

twelve or fourteen days, during which time an immense mass of evidence was gone into. To have seen him in the dock, though seated in consideration of his rank, with harnessed elephants and mounted retainers waiting in the courtyard, for news to carry to his friends, was not to forget the scene, rapidly as it passed by. His lip was constantly turned up, to tell how little care weighed upon him, and for many days his hopes flagged not. He could not realize the possibility of his life, the life of a noble, being required of him, or the daring which would take it from the heart of the Moguls.

Shumshudeen was a youth of only twenty-two, of good features, but sinister expression, acquired by dissipation akin to Moslem tastes; and it was said that a more than Moslem cunning formed the leading trait in his character. Day after day he sat, unmoved amid the crowd; his turban of kincob harboured in its folds gems of great value; and as the natives around looked at these, they doubted if the possessor of them was likely to be hanged. The Nawab winced only at being deprived of his hookah; the want of it he felt to be a greater degradation than his appearance at the bar, which latter he cared little about. At length, after many days, the trial reached its culminating point; evidence closed step by step round the unhappy Nawab, and enfolded him in a web, so curiously netted by the perseverance of the commission, that no doubt of a verdict remained. The Nawab was desired to stand, and the judge summed up: the jury retired but a short space, and returned with a true bill. Even when the judge put on the sable cap, the prisoner faltered not. He left the dock firmly convinced that a man who is doomed to be drowned, is quite safe from hanging.

I shall not describe the last scene of Shumshudeen's life: it is but a vulgar case of hanging by the neck

after all, worthy no more of note than the last hours of a Burke or of a Manning. As the day approached, he lost gradually his sense of safety, and at last he put off his lip of defiance, and gave himself up to his fate. Shumshudeen gave life for life. It was on the evening of the day he suffered, about sunset, when a native of rank pulled up within the camp, and enquired for the tent of the "Doctor Sahib." He was courteously supplied with a chair, and he soon gave me to understand that a lady of the unfortunate Nawab's zenana was in great distress, and he feared, danger; that the native hakeem who had seen her, was much alarmed, and that great anxiety was in consequence felt. He begged me to accompany him to the place where the lady was: I complied. We entered the city by the Cashmere gate, always held by a British guard, under an officer, and wended our way by a dusty road, crossing the canal, and ultimately passing under the chief gate and magnificent red granite wall, which encloses the palace of the Emperor of Delhi, the only representative of the Moguls. As we reached the middle of the wall, and looking to the right hand, the "Chandne Chowk," or "silver market place," the Regent Street of the Mogul city, opened out at a right angle. Here a still imposing street of a mile in length, runs through the city, and terminates at the Ajmere gate. The remains of a small canal, which formerly ran down the centre of this thoroughfare, are still very plain, and probably repairable. At this hour, the favourite street was quite gay. The Feramorzes of the present day may be seen at sundown, lounging about in couples, Pylades and Orestes fashion, with bespangled skull-caps on their heads, beneath which an impenetrable mass of greasy half-curled hair, which would be a boon to a young artist, runs wild upon their shoulders. Pylades and Orestes are inseparable,

and parade much as European birds of the same feather do, peering in at every lattice, and up at every balcony, where a half-veiled female face appears or may be.

A boastful "chabook sowar," or horse-breaker, was curveting a half-subdued Guzerattee horse, just where this street opens out over against the palace, gaining notice from many a passer-by. He cut out the figure 8 in the dusty space, most circumscribingly; sprung successively three times forward, upon half the establishment of legs a horse was intended to do his work with, and gained great admiration from the crowd, for a feat which had cruelty in it, and strained a fine animal. These trifles we soon left behind, and continued our dusty path through a range of "bells of arms," occupied by a British native corps of sappers and miners. Mosques with gilded domes and minarets glistened in this locality, but there was no time to look at them. We arrived at length at a district known as "Derriow-gunge." Within a wall, upon a rising ground, and just overhanging the Jumna, was the building we sought, and the residence of the late Nawab. It was a spacious one-storied residence, verandahed and pillared, but having a "tykonnah," or lower story, cut out of the solid rock, on the river aspect, to retire to in the hot season.

I was soon put into the hands of the female attendants, who conducted me to an inner court, led to by angular passages, devoid of windows, so common in the dwellings of Moslem lords, who allow their ladies but a scanty supply of fresh air. It is no usual occurrence that will make a Moslem lady submit to be visited by an English physician. I therefore, expected a case of great necessity, and found consternation upon all the attendants. The patient was a lady of twenty years, just such another as Lalla Rookh might have

been. She had frightened all around her out of their propriety, by putting on convulsions; and whilst I examined her symptoms, I thought it was no great wonder. I made them take her out upon the platform towards the river, and give her fresh air. It was the best medicine possible, for this was a case of hysteria. They asked me if she would live till morning: I said she would, and took my leave again.

To this moment, I know not the position of that lady in reference to the Nawab, nor was it becoming in me to ask. As I came out of the gateway of the residence, a string of camels starting on a night's journey, with canvas tents laden, was passing; and the pattering bullock "garry," or carriage of a city dealer, with tinkling bells and gaudy trappings, on bullocks of miniature size, hurried on, as if glad to get past the locality. The mansion I had just left soon became empty: no one would buy it. When resident more permanently at Delhi, at a subsequent period, I took many a peep at it. It has now a shattered gate, and a ragged wall, and toppling pillars, and the space around grows strange uncouth plants, little known in other places, and that seem to have taken a liking to a spot which the native, of whatever caste, carefully avoids. When passing, the bullock-driver curses his slow team, looks over his shoulder with a scared look, and twists the poor animals' tails until they crack. No Asiatic dares to look within that inclosure. From time to time, I paid it a visit; my groom besought me to pardon him for staying outside; and he wondered much at my curious taste, which he no doubt considered morbid.

Few of those who visit Delhi are particularly zealous in ferreting out the musty historical chapters, in which the chivalry of the Moguls is recorded; Timour, Baber, Humaiyoon, Akbar, Jehangheer, Shah Jehan, and

Aurungzebe; and still greater mystery hangs over the rubbish heaps and crumbling brick and mortar of Indraput, the ancient Delhi, the site of which is some twelve miles off. But there is a garden, now neglected, called "Shalimar," where a "Light of the Harem" held certain fancy-balls. Dried-up tanks, and miniature canals, and fountains equally thirsty, flanked by cypresses and clumps of distracted flowering shrubs, are still there. If any water is in the tanks, it has a green scum upon it, and no ever-playing water-jet sparkles to keep it fresh; but should a stray lotus blow, or a ragged convolvulus creep with many-hued blossoms, it is all you may have for your trouble, except a malignant fever, known as "the pukka fever of the Shalimar."

As I have said, the Cashmere gate through which the road leading to the cantonment passes, is always held by a British picquet. The sward outside and to the left of it is fresh in the memory of many an old Indian; the little nook at the immediate angle has been the most useful piece of ground that I know for its size, and unbuilt upon. Groups of recreant camels in "taut" overcoats, surrounded by small square boxes, constructed of singularly substantial wood, frequently occupy it. Try to lift one of these! whew—w—w! shot, and shell, and grape, and canister, and hundreds of rounds of ball-ammunition, pack up in a small bulk, although not feather-weight. To day that grassy spot may be so occupied, to-morrow it may afford camping ground to a treasure-party, called upon to study patience in tents, in the month of May, and imbibe the reflected heat from the city walls. The treasure party having broken ground, a far different group succeeds; tents low in altitude, of the "shouldaree" build, alternately striped with red, and blue, and white; with zenana

“konnats,” or walls, screening mysterious occupants. Cat-hammed ponies, and baggage bullocks, and camels, and indolent attendants, and matchlock-men, give importance to the travelling Rajah of the Gwalior country. Here he is, a Mahratta chief, on a noble dark brown Dukkanee horse; a warrior too he is, with a gold-inlaid greave upon his arm, and a tulwar or sword, the blade of which is worth a hundred guineas, and the jewelled hilt it is difficult to value. He is a short, thickset, bull-necked, snub-nosed, short-limbed man; speak to him, and you will find him a perfect gentleman, yet he recks little of a basketful of heads as a present, if Gwalior reports are no scandal; the bull of the arena this time, and no disparagement to the caterwauling cockpit of Lucknow. The Mahratta chief is followed at speed by two fiddlehead nags of low breeding, whose greasy riders bear long unwieldy lances, useless for offence or defence.

The Rajah vacates this noted camping-ground, leaving a scanty footing for the Light Cavalry corps that has come over from Meerut, three marches in one, to quell an imaginary rising of the Moguls; all, from the colonel to the trumpeter, looking disappointed to find throats whole, which had been duly settled as submitted to the Mogul knife twenty-four hours before. These are episodes of the Cashmere gate; the subaltern who commands the gateway for a week, might gain materials for a novel by watching it from the guard-room verandah, would he but cast off his ennui; to him the camp below, the gate, the walls, the collector's house, the Jumna Musjid, its domes and minarets, do little to lessen the misery of his durance. He lights his cheroot, and squints into the gardens marching with the inner gate.

Delhi was the summer residence of the Mogul kings,

and is still the home of their representative; but he only sways the sceptre within the palace-walls. These walls are worthy remnants of the Moguls; of gigantic proportions and hewn of enormous blocks of red granite. The ornamental devices are strictly Mahomedan, nor is it a palace they enclose, but a miniature city. The dwelling of the king forms but a mere speck within them, and the mean hut of thatchwork, the stable shed, and the beggar's stall of a few leaves, are blent with buildings to raise which great sums have been lavished. The descendants of the great Timour Shah have become very numerous and very poor.

"Who are you, so ignorant of manners as to enter a gentleman's verandah with your shoes on?"

The offender stepped back a pace; his carelessly twisted turban of cotton cloth reeked with grease and perspiration. His surcoat was equally filthy, his under garments the same; but drawing himself up, only half rebuked, and not devoid of dignity, and slapping his palm against his breast, he said:

"Sahib! I am a Shazada, and the lineal descendant of Timour Beg."

The man was selling ducks, yet *his* was a "true bill." He *was* a Shazada, but only in a collateral way; and duck merchants equally illustrious are frequently met with at Delhi.

It was the festival of the Buckri-Eed. From a little turret, of perhaps the most magnificent mosque in the world, the Jumna Musjid, I looked down upon a tide of human heads flowing towards it. The niches, and minarets, and enormous flights of steps, were clad with spectators. Many a point of great interest was visible. Far to the south-east a glistening column arose from amidst ruins; it was fresh and bright, surrounded by the débris of old Indraput; this was the Minar or column

of Kuttub. Great tombs of elaborate workmanship, but all Moslem, dotted the plains for fifteen miles. Close under me, were the red granite walls of the Mogul kings; but a hundred years had gone since the son of the shepherd of Khorassan, the modern Nero of the East, had sat upon them and turned a deaf ear to the nation's wail, and laughed at the blazing city; the ruthless Nadir.

Desultory shots from all sorts of artillery, beating of tomtoms, and jingling sounds from bell-adorned elephants, proclaimed the advent of the "Padsha," the Great Mogul, who descended from his elephant, crossed the quadrangle, and entered the sanctuary of the moolwas or priests, beneath the domes of the mosque. The hum of the moolwas increased into a swell, as the crowd in holiday garb, and with great decorum, rapidly filled the quadrangle. Higher and higher still the moolwas' voices called, and the sea of turbans was bent forward as if a single head; again and again undulating; thousands bending the knee and head in unison. A goat was now sacrificed: in days when rupees were of less account, a camel usually was the offering.

Come with me, reader, some twelve miles eastward from this festival, to the ruined heaps of Indraput: There are too many objects of interest: we shall only examine the column of Kuttub, and the arcade of curious squared and blackened pillars close by. Indraput was one of the greatest of those old cities of Hindostan, of which the names and débris are almost all we have remaining. Gour, Mandoo, Sirhind, are shades of great cities. Miles of brick heaps, crumbling arches, riven turrets, cunningly carved columns, tell plainly were they once flourished; they have not been blotted out like Nineveh and Babylon; their sites are not quite so desolate as these latter, and

certainly far more beautiful. The Minar or column of Kuttub, is a gigantic pillar of red granite, in shape rather approaching to the sugar-loaf, but more slender. It is divided into compartments or stories, each singularly rich in individual device; verses from the Koran in relief are beautifully carved from the hard surface. These stories, which amount to five, diminish in diameter and height as they proceed upwards. The niches in the staircase have become favourite haunts for bats, and owls, and other night-birds. From the top of the Kuttub Minar, the plain for many miles around seems dotted with ruins in all stages of decay. The date of this column is not so very distant, its builder, Kuttub, being of the Mogul dynasty; but close by is a magnificent arcade of pillars, so quaintly carved, and so removed from everything around it in point of character, that the contrast quickly draws the visitor's attention. This arcade is very ancient: it is not known who built it; it is probably Hindoo, but beyond this history sayeth not. The whole space for miles around is a chronicle, stereotyped in granite tombs, yet deficient of a key to it. The Moguls vied with the Kings of Golconda in this point; the history of their times was written in tombs.

CHAPTER XXIV.

MUSTY BRICKS AND MOSS-TROOPERS.

ANOTHER cold season found the troop at Agra, a week's journey from the ruins of Indraput. Agra is worthy of pen and pencil: it would give scope to bushels of bristles, and no end of goose-quills. Put an artist on a turret springing from the Jumna, and tell him to paint old Akberabad. No rude imagination or coarse digits could give the white marble tracery of the Taj, the tomb of Nourmahal, which, with bald-headed domes of white, are trying to the eye. Here are other chapters of Mogul times: a stern mode of printing. It is rumoured, that among the ruins so lavishly margining both banks of the Jumna, untold treasures lie hid, believed by the natives to be guarded by genii; and that ghouls, those classic revellers in Moslem graveyards, prowl nightly in their sacrilegious calling. If ruined towers, with crumbling foundations, and tombs in odd corners, with odd devices, and fragments of arched halls and glittering tile-clad domes of gaudy colours, and pearly mosques and stately minarets, can realize such monstrosities, there

are few places more likely to harbour them than the current-worn towers which jut into the Jumna.

When the sun is glaring overhead it is not the hour to make Agra a landscape. It is between dawn and sunrise, that beautiful and quickly-passing half-hour, that the stranger's boat should drop down the ruin-haunted river, when the haze of a delicate lilac is the ground, and the edifices are indistinct masses of purple. Then the Taj Mahal is not too bright; and whilst the misty half-hour lingers, it were not wise to break the spell by too near an approach. Take the gleaming day, however, for details, the niceties of mosaics and arabesques, and marble slabs cut out as finely to the general eye as the ivory fans of "John Chinaman." Hundreds of yards of walled surface are inlaid with jaspers, agates, and chrysoprases. The Taj fails from over-perfection: like a toy upon an overgrown scale, and sadly exposed for want of a glass-case, it carries with it an aura of the Burlington Arcade, when viewed closely and in a bright light. But once within the lofty archway, and under the sonorous dome, the impression is dispelled. An octagon marble screen, each facet cut out like the gossamer web of a lace-maker, and differing in device, encloses the Mogul king and Nourmahal. A whisper of wonder is multiplied a hundred-fold, and mounts, still audible, up into the dome, scarcely *ever* fading into chaos.

As I turned to leave this enormous chamber, I confess to some delusion of the senses, in which certain *improvements* on "Lalla Rookh" bore some trifling share, when my very pleasant reverie was broken in upon by the approach of an European, whom I knew to be a stranger from certain traits connected with the manner in which his native cicerone addressed him. He was a philanthropist, a member of the British

Parliament, who had come all the way from England to rake up the grievances of all the Moguls. Somehow the philanthropist totally dispelled my poetical delusion; and owing him a debt of gratitude for this, I take this opportunity of clearing it off.

But Agra has a little gem that I cannot pass over: the "Moti Musjid," or pearly mosque, a fairy structure got up by Aladdin's breath, a temple of enchantment. This delicate toy is placed within the fort, a rude but secure casket for it. The Taj and the Moti Musjid are kept in perfect repair; the others are in ruins—most of them nameless. The mildew, and the creeping plant, and the season's rains have claimed the names along with the brick and mortar—remnants like those of the Zigris and Abencerrages who rallied round Boabdil in the days of the Alhambra.

"Bissun Doss! born in Dera-Gazi-Khan upon the Indus, and at present Postmaster-General to His Highness the Nawab of Bahawulpore, in his village of Kassimka, on the eastern bank of the Sutlej, favour me, I beg of thee, with a brace of camels and a guide. I am most ready to pay for them in promissory notes, and shall be deeply indebted to thee into the bargain."

"Husoor! not a camel remains to the village of Kassimka. The "Coompanee Bahadoor" has taken the last leg of them; nor is Kassimka better off for horse-flesh. Those thieves of Sikhs, from the other side, have not left a mane or a tail to us more than they have done to thee, O Khodawund! May the shadows of these Sikhs never increase by the length of a mosquito, but may the memory of their parents be blotted out! And in truth, Khodawund, you have many days' journey before you; and two days further on, the ground is under water."

“So much more do I need the beasts of burden, Sir Moonshee! for these Lahore bearers have taken their leave of me, and are at this moment, I doubt not, at the Punjaubee village of Site-Meroke, and busy at their hookahs,—bad luck to them!”

“Khodawund! no wonder: these ‘akalies’ are dreadful fellows, and the sight of them was quite enough to make any bearers take to their heels. And didn’t they just ease your highness of a few rupees and other trifles of value?”

“Very true, friend Bissun! but I mean to report that matter to my esteemed friend the “Lion of Lahore,” who has a queer way with him in respect to such little matters. And I must get you to send a ‘chit’ to the ‘sahib’ at Bahawulpore. It will be your own fault, Sir Moonshee, if I cannot report favourably of your hospitality to a British officer in difficulties, if not in absolute distress.”

“Husoor! your slave is at your service entirely, and without any reserve; but what can he do? Camels don’t grow like ‘kirbee’ stalks, nor is horse-flesh reared from Hindostanee grunterns.”

“Just so, Bissun Doss! then favour me with your ‘*sea-i-kulm*,’* and a scrap of paper. These rogues have taken everything but palanquin and pistols. I shall drop a line or two to Bahawulpore, and ask for a ‘Rajdaree purwannah.’† I won’t say more than I can possibly help about you. You will tie the ‘chit’‡ outside the post-bag?”

Such was my request at Kassimka, a town of Bahawulpore, and to the Dak Moonshee of that place, a Hindoo by descent, but born upon the Indus; and at which, to me, celebrated place I had arrived ‘sans

* Pen and ink; literally “reed and blacking.”

† Passport under the rajah’s signature.

‡ Letter.

everything' but clothing. My kit had captivated a body of Runjeet Singh's "akalies," who had captured it in turn, having got information of my route and laid in wait for me on the Bahawulpore side of the river. Their wild and fanatical threatenings put the bearers to instant flight, and *they* forgot to return. By sheer accident my pistols were in a drawer, unwontedly placed like a sword-case at the head of the palanquin; not expecting anything in that locality, *they*, and a trifle or two of no value, escaped. I only wondered that they did not take my head off. Away they scoured as wildly as they came. I laid myself down again in the palanquin, and expected the return of the bearers; the bearers knew better, and forgot to return. After several hours of suspense, and fearful of delay being dangerous, I left the palanquin for any one who could carry it, and jogged on towards Kassimka. Fortunately, the "akalies" left my travelling-map also in the drawer. That was rather a depressing march of thirteen miles; but the road was plain though rutty, and I reached the Dak Moonshee's "compound" so fatigued, that, stretching myself upon the sand, I was almost instantly asleep.

Bissun Doss, seeing a European in difficulties, and under such strange circumstances, had great expectation of some windfall: he determined to keep me in difficulties. Thus it was that we came to the knotty point involved in the foregoing dialogue. I lay all day stretched out upon a rude pallet in the garden; but rain coming on, I removed under a shed; and after writing a note to one Peer Ibrahim Khan, whom I understood was a British agent at Bahawulpore, I had to pass the time as best I might, Bissun Doss procuring me some cakes of barley flour and a vegetable curry. The difficulty in Bissun Doss's mind was the

want of coin. If I had had that I might have gained his heart; but the "akalies" had taken every stiver, and I had nothing but I. O. U. to pay my way in, a currency which Bissun Doss did not understand. Beginning, however, to think that he might possibly incur the displeasure of his master if he refused *all* aid, he gradually showed symptoms of relenting, for I had seen the letter despatched to Peer Ibrahim.

"Moonshee Sahib," said I, "I hope you will prove mistaken in this account of the poverty of Kassimka: I shall certainly start at sundown."

The Moonshee salaamed courteously. He was thawing; generosity is capable of being frozen in that warm climate as in any other.

"Will the Husoor give me a purwannah to claim his abandoned palkee, as a reward, if he can procure the means of travel?"

"Certainly, friend Bissun; the palkee is at your service." And I wrote him an authority to claim it. I must have left it for any one to take who chose; indeed, I had quite forgotten it.

I now felt confident of being able to make one march at least. Towards sunset my travelling cortège arrived. A sowar, of a most ruffian cut, on a bony, lank horse, of as vile breed and temper as could be seen; the four-legged brute squinted, which gave him a most sinister expression. His rider led another for my use, smaller in size and not much superior. My guide and escort was a very rough cavalier, in very dirty garments: an old rusty breast-plate and back-piece formed his defensive armour; a spear, and a tulwar or sabre, his offensive. A badly folded turban hung carelessly from his head; his limbs were quite bare, and his toes stuck through one of his shoes when in the stirrups, which supporters were of

brass, and like great shovels. But he was past the prime of life, and conveyed to my mind no great sensation of security arising from his presence; he was a sort of Asiatic "Christie of the Clinthill," a regular mosstrooper of the Sutlej, and far from honest in the "cut of his jib," as seamen say when they spy a pirate.

Not deeming it, however, good policy to turn up my nose at this convoy, I expressed great admiration at his cavalier-like appearance, and the form and condition of his animals. "Friend Sowargee!" said I, as we took to the road much like him of *La Mancha* on one of his celebrated adventures, "pray thee, what name might thy father have bestowed on thee?"

"Runjeet, Khodawund! at your service."

"Then, friend Runjeet! be pleased to keep a very little in advance and to one side. The night is somewhat hazy at times in this jungle, I should think. You may not be easily kept in sight, and our ears may scarcely do duty for our eyes: and, friend Runjeet! again, who may that rough matted-haired fellow be just ahead of us?"

"Khodawund! he is come to guide us through the jungle: I cannot say that I can depend upon my own knowledge of the road."

"So ho! then he is getting on too fast; just sing out to him."

The Sowar called to the guide, who slackened his speed, and I fell once more into conversation with Runjeet, whom I began to think a good companion and a very quaint fellow. On looking up, the guide had disappeared: I had omitted to keep watch on him, and he had dashed into the jungle, and was no doubt in full tilt on his return to Kassimka.

“Harramzadah!”* muttered the Sowar; “we must do without him.”

“Your friend is not much to be trusted, I fear, Runjeet.”

“May the grave of his father be defiled!” replied the horseman. We were well into the jungle and the road only a footpath; and it occurred to me how lost I should be if the Sowar should follow the example just set him.

“Runjeet! it is said that this country, and especially this bit of jungle, bear no very good name: I see you are well provided against contingencies in your own line, but I have a couple of out-speaking gentlemen here that had better be looked to.”

I measured both barrels with the ramrods and placed fresh caps upon the nipples; then tried the hammers, which tinkled quite musically. I know no greater feeling of security than is conveyed by an euphonious gun or pistol-lock when the trigger is under your own control and only to be used in self-defence. Thinking, however, that claptraps may occasionally do something towards preserving human life, and that a possibility existed of a fresh charge being prudent, thereby rendering it necessary to get rid of that in use, which had been too long in the barrel, and I drew Runjeet’s attention just at the moment to a superannuated earthen water jar, deserted by some traveller.

“Sowargee! that gurrah is much the size of a man’s head: what chance would the runaway guide have had, had I known his intention?” I took far from a studied aim, indeed it was little removed from blazing away with one’s eyes shut: but the bullet pierced the earthen gurrah with a sharp, ringing, echoing noise.

* Scoundrel.

“Sabash! Khodawund! Sabash!” exclaimed the Sowar.

“Wah, wah! that is nothing at all for me,” said I, as I proceeded to load the weapon afresh. Fearful of losing the credit that the chance shot had gained me, I fired the other pistol in the air and re-charged it. These little manœuvres were very innocent, and not at all devoid of their proper and legitimate uses: I would recommend them to men with greater pretensions and love for bloodshed. They procured for me much respect in the eyes of Runjeet, the mosstrooper of the Sutlej.

“Have you always been a Sowar, friend Runjeet? I think I can recognise in you an early acquaintance with war, when your blood was red, and your arm and leg more stalwart than they now are.”

“Hah, Sahib! your slave has seen blood drawn.”

“Nay; for that matter the sight of blood does little for a man. I have had some experience in the drawing of it, few men more so: the difference consists in its being done in anger or in cold blood—I am entirely on the cold-blooded principle.”

“Sutch-bat! just so, Khodawund! I could have told that from the off-hand way in which you broke the gurrah—I would not that my head had been there.”

Runjeet did not exactly apprehend my meaning, but it by no means signified—perhaps it was better that he did not.

“And where may you have served, friend Runjeet? on the hot-blooded or high-pressure principle? There are men who have a very high respect for any cavalier who may have done so, and gained renown therein.”

“Khodawund! old age is creeping over your slave: I am now a Sowar, I carry messages, act as guard or police, and now and then I do a little fighting, just in

a small way, by way of keeping my hand in. But, Husoor, I was once leader of a Ressalah of horse, and more than that, Khodawund, I had the honour to be present at and take a part in the last Goorumata* of the Khalsa."

"Sabash, Sowargee! said I, bowing respectfully; I have heard of these Goorumata of the Maharajah of Lahore; they are now out of date, but I feel much honoured in having for an escort one who has borne a part in one of those noted assemblies of the Khalsa. I must trouble you, before we part, for an account of that episode in your life, friend Runjeet!"

This conversation had been in snatches, and time had worn on: it might be midnight and rather darkish. The road seemed to be no road in particular, but was free of the jungle. Just at this moment a whistle, sharp and significant, came from our left-hand, but quite close: the whistle could not have been twenty yards off.

"Harramzadah!" vociferated the Sowar, and drawing his tulwar, he charged manfully into the darkness. I could see nothing, so I stood still; to have done anything else would have been folly. After a few minutes' suspense, the Sowar rejoined me, muttering various epithets against the mysterious whistler, of far too flowery a character to be introduced to English readers; for in conformity with Asiatic taste, they involved the reputation of all the females connected with the unknown family. But friend Runjeet was quite sure, that had he only got a glimpse of him, he would have stopped his whistling in future.

* The Goorumata was an assembly of chieftains convened at times by Runjeet Singh, but only on occasions of emergency. These conventions bore a semi-military, semi-religious character. The last Goorumata was held somewhere about 1818, and is described by Elphinstone.

"But is whistling a crime deserving of death, Sowargee?" I asked.

"When out of place and out of time, it becomes *significant*, Khodawund: and an honest whistler stays to reap the praise, nor bolts when challenged: had he not done so, he would now be repenting it."

"What a desire to draw blood some men have!"

"True, Khodawund! every man to his trade; but I thought your lordship confessed to a little yourself."

"True again, friend Runjeet; I had forgotten that circumstance: I must make the amende."

I was so fatigued from the high-peaked native saddle, that I now took to walking. A man is well off when he finds his own legs better journeying than a horse's. On arriving at the village of Chekoke, close to the Sutlej, I stretched myself under a tree, put the hard saddle for a pillow, and was asleep in a second and a half. It was about two in the morning. I dreamt: it was of England and its cold climate, and rainy blasts, and Welch blankets—a queer dream in that climate, but duly interpreted when I awoke, for it had rained upon me six hours, and a pool of water was soaking well into my back; dreamy sensations of raw climates were thus reflected on my sensorium. I got up and shook myself, and in a little time the sun broke through the clouds piercingly, and with the strength of an auger, and it bored through my skull-cap at intervals that day. It is strange that clouds increase the sun's power; they act like a lens and concentrate the sun's rays; but it is stranger still that one's head should be always in the focus.

Passing villagers stopped to look at me, and almost collected into a crowd.

"Friend Runjeet," I said to the Sowar, who had been in the village getting his meal, and had now

returned, "canst thou not forage to the extent of a barley-meal cake and a couple of eggs, for breakfast?"

"Hah! sahib! I shall do my best."

"And hark ye, Sowarjee! get me a runner, who will undertake to carry a letter to the Feringee Chownee, at Ferozepoor. I will give him a chit, that will be as good as ten rupees in silver, when he delivers it."

The sowar kindled a fire, and in a very short time produced a cake of barley flour. I dressed the eggs myself upon the embers, and made a fair meal under the circumstances; the runner was soon got, and with a short spear, ornamented with little bells, in his hand, he awaited my letter. It was by no means the best specimen of correspondence; a few pencil lines on a wretched scrap of paper, to a friend at Ferozepoor, begging him to send out a brace of camels to meet me: I was afraid of a fever or some other ailment overtaking me. The runner shook his spear, the bells chimed a mimic peal, and he took to the road. At sundown, after another frugal meal, the sowar and I were on the march again.

"Friend Runjeet! do you know aught of the country on the western bank?"

"Hah, Khodawund! from Lahore to Peshawur; your slave served for a time under the foreign governor of the latter place.

"A choice service that, my friend; it is said that he has a strong box of goodly size, and keeps in rare order the hot-headed Peshawur men."

"Sutch-bat, sahib! it is so: the Peshawurees are far from being babies, and they often have a morning lesson on the walls and gates of Peshawur. Many a head dries upon the latter: were there no such wall-flowers, there would be no respect for government."

"The governor's life is held on rather a precarious

tenor they say; Monsieur Avitabile can have no common nerves, Sowarjee!"

"It isn't everything that shakes them, Khodawund!"

"I have heard it said that noses, and ears, and tongues, are sometimes seen upon Peshawur's gates; do they grow there?"

"Sahib! they rarely thrive in that locality. The Peshawur men think little of a nose lost, if it is neatly done. There is even a fashion upon that point, as far west as Peshawur; it is wonderful how trifling such matters become under custom."

"So they do, friend Runjeet! men's minds get hardened in that climate, and their consciences become not over squeamish on the subject of small appendages, not absolutely essential to human life."

We had a tedious journey that night. The ground and air were damp; the climate of Hindostan Proper was becoming apparent, for there is seldom any rain in Bahawulpore. We wandered from the road every half hour; at times having none, and at others having to choose from too many footpaths; among patches of cultivation, each patch having its Persian wheel for irrigation. At length we got fairly puzzled, but a light on one side drew us towards it. It came from no village, and had no brightness, but was merely the dull light of an ember without flame. It came from the gool or hookah of a gualla or cow-herd, and on gaining it, we found ourselves amidst a herd of cattle, reposing for the night. Several cowherds were stretched out asleep, upon stretchers or charpoys, in the midst of their flocks: one only keeping watch. We roused a sleeper, and appointed him guide upon the spot. He vowed with uplifted hands, that the road was quite unknown to him, that he had never travelled it, and was quite a stranger to the country, and yet the sowar

asserted that his home was close by. We had to make some dreadful threats in consequence, and thus urged on, the half-sleeping guide glided before us, hookah in hand, like a will-o'-the-wisp.

He was of a subdued humble caste, and had an instinctive horror of any poke he might get from behind. Poor fellow! he was quite safe, I would not have injured him upon any account, but then he did not know it, which made a difference. He turned out, however, to know the road well. I had not a fraction of a coin to bestow on him, poor old man, in lieu of two night hours, during which he worked for me; but glad to excess at being released from compulsory service, he made no great outcry at my poverty.

Sleep! real sleep, not to be had from hop pillows, not at the command of lords and great dignitaries; the genuine article possessed in greater purity by the peasant than the peer, because worked for, and which the greatest earthly physician cannot give a man, came to my pillow unasked, and sought my hospitality. We were great friends, notwithstanding the proximity of the Sikh states, and a taste that the Sikhs have for throat-cutting.

A couple of marches more, conducted in this desultory style, brought us well within the protected Sikh states. I observed the sowar's vivacity give way, and he shewed a tendency to sink into tales of a "raw-head and bloody-bones" stamp. The sight of a Sikh invariably damped him; he had a bad opinion of the children of the Khalsa, and looked upon them much in the same light in which nursery populations regard certain giants of old, who thought nothing of eating a few men of ordinary dimensions for breakfast, and knew nothing of indigestion after it.

I had been enjoying my morning's nap after my

night's march, more than usual; it might have been that a zest was given to it by a slight and constant rain which fell; when I was sensible of voices in conversation, and on looking up, I found a "shooter sowar" or courier, mounted on a fleet camel, all bell-adorned, and leading a similar animal. He presented a note, and asked me if I was the owner of it: my name was on it. It was from a friend at Ferozepoor, of the commissariat, whose shadow I hope has increased ever since, for very probably he saved my life: four days more, in sun and in rain, would certainly have made me run a great risk. When Runjeet discovered the object of the courier, he was beside himself with joy, for his fears of dipping further into the Sikh country were very great. In an hour, he formally asked permission to depart homewards.

"Husoor! Rooksut muncta."—"My lord! I wish my permission to go—my leave?"

I sent into the village, and borrowed writing materials, and writing an order upon the pay establishment for twenty rupees, I presented it to the sowar, who, quite charmed therewith, bent down to my feet, and expressed a great desire that such pieces of luck might frequently fall in his way. He was quite satisfied that the note was equivalent to coin.

Having given the "shooter sowar" and his camels, four hours' rest, we got into the saddles about two P.M. The sun, magnified through the rainy clouds, produced a nausea. We soon got into the rapid, shuffling jingle of a riding camel's pace. It was sixty miles to Ferozepoor! I determined to do it before sleeping—not a bad stretch. In about an hour, we arrived at an inundated tract: a couple of miles of water had to be got over, and the camel is far from an amphibious quadruped, indeed his element is sand; little elevations formed numerous

islands, but some of the channels between them were suspiciously deep, but we took to the water, and very soon found that we had quite enough to do; now and then resting on an island, to let the camels' nerves settle down, which were sadly put out of tune by such a trial twice in the same twenty-four hours. At length we came to the main sheet of water. It really was serious work now; five feet of it already, and not much to come and go upon, before it would be out of a man's depth. At this particular moment, the camel lost its footing, and turned over, but finding my chin above water, I was much interested in getting the quadruped once more upon his legs. When that greatly-to-be-desired result was effected, I found that my pistols had dropped from their holsters. It took a dozen dives to bring them up again, and the barrels and locks were full of mud. The sowar looked on rather astonished at my perseverance, and being more at home on camel-back, and better up to camel management, he had contrived to keep his animal upright: he had therefore much the advantage of me; I by no means disputed it.

Before feeling secure upon hard ground, the sun was low in the west. Taking off my habiliments and wringing them, when put on again, they felt dry comparatively, and did not differ in a great degree from the effects of good hard exercise, without a lake to perform it in. The saddle being of more spongy materials, kept the moisture with great perseverance; but for that, I had been quite comfortable. At the first village, the sowar, who was a Moslem, rejoicing in the name of Taj Mahomed, hastily cooked a curry and some barley cakes, and we made a sumptuous meal. By nine o'clock we were again on the road. Striking round the corner of a village, a large animal

bounded out, close to the camel's head; it was a wolf roused by the noise; and with the ungraceful slouching canter peculiar to the tribe, he scoured away towards the Sutlej.

It was an hour past midnight as we wended our way up rather a steep ascent, to a town fortified and placed on a steep. This was called Memdote, originally considered a place of strength, and held by a khan of some little pretension to turbulence and hostility to Europeans. The khan's stronghold frowned upon the surrounding district. The ascent was roughly paved and precipitous on either side, and at the top an old iron-studded gate, having a wicket on one side, interrupted further progress. Outside the gate was a post with something above it: I could not discover what it was, but the feudal towers and battlements of Memdote accumulated in a confused mass around. There was no sentry outside the iron-knobbed gate, but challenging the "dirwan" or porter through a loophole in the wicket, the latter sleepily responded:

"Dirwadza ne kolne secta."—"I cannot open the gate."

"Come, Dirwanjee! open the gate like a good fellow; there are nine "kos"* between this and Ferozepoor, and the ground around Memdote is flooded, and we fear to go off the road, for the moon is not yet up."

"Nawab ke hookum nuheen."—"It is the khan's order. Neither Feringee nor Sikh shall pass this gate until gun-fire. If you like you may pass outside by the footpath which is there."

"Wah! wah! Dirwangee! Is the khan of Memdote so sound a sleeper that a single weary traveller is refused a passage, or does the dirwan look for 'buckshish?' "†

* About 13 miles.

† Present or bribe.

“Such is the Nawab’s order,” and the porter threw himself down upon his rickety bedstead, which we heard creaking and straining under the trial it had been put to. During this, and under the confidence afforded by the intervention of the gate, he refreshed himself by animadverting, in no measured terms, on the character of all our male and female relatives, from the earliest period of our having any.

A heavy shower with a gust of wind passed over: we stood as well under the gateway as possible to avoid it, a creaking of rusty iron-work overhead accompanied it, fitful and melancholy. The camels trembled and shook their heads and necks, making their bells jingle; the creaking was renewed, but the shower had already passed towards the Suttlej, and the moon was lighting up matters, but somewhat lazily. On looking up now, the creaking problem was philosophically solved. The post before-mentioned had a cage a-top of iron hoop, and a felon’s body was undergoing a seasoning process. It was a fitting ornament to the gate of Memdote; the wind played a sort of tune upon this rude Æolian harp, turning the whole round at times, for it swung upon a swivel—an idea altogether conservative.

We had to retrace our steps and circumgyrate the feudal keep of Memdote, amid miserable suburban hovels, and herds of shelter-seeking cattle, guided to the footpath by the desultory advice of half-sleeping cowherds. Once clear of Memdote, and having got upon the main branch of the road, we still held on, but the camels’ bells did not send forth so cheering a chime; muscular fibre and strained nerve were giving tokens of exhausted energy. A *dák* runner, with spear and bells, passed us now, *his* bells had more pith in them: he could not have passed us in the morning, now he did it without much effort. I fell asleep for five

minutes at a time, and dreamt distinctly, and then awoke, still sitting upright. I mentioned it to the Sowar, who said :

“Sleep on, Sahib ! I shall keep you on the right track and rouse you when we get to Ferozepoor.”

Not altogether satisfied with the safe policy of this advice, I struggled to keep awake. When a little boy I have felt the same drowsiness at church, a queer, overpowering sensation, which never overtakes a boy but there. Why it should overtake young people is quite an unsolved problem, for it does so irresistibly. I was now reminded of it ; an episode of Dr. Birch, and a memento of counter-irritation administered upon a broad principle. As we passed over the parading ground of Ferozepoor, the sun was up, and a troop of flying artillery passed us at a gallop, but they were only in fun—it was a half-and-half review day of some sort, or perhaps, only a freak of a Major-General, whose opinions of military matters were guided by the importance of pipe-clay, and who had ideas of his own on the potency of the sun’s rays.

As I entered the “bungalow”* of a friend, I found him dressing, his eyes still muzzy-looking ; and throwing myself down upon the stretcher he had just quitted, I said :

“Tom, my dear fellow ! have a dák laid for me to Loodianah, and see that I am called, not sooner than twenty-four hours by the clock. I intend to sleep all that time.”

* A lofty cone-roofed house.

CHAPTER XXV.

CAMPAIGNING CRUMBS.

WHEN a man furnishes his house, even "camp-fashion," three times in the same year, it is a sign that with him the times are uncertain; and when times are uncertain in the East, every prudent man looks to the condition of his canvas. The eve of a march is inconvenient for hole-mending, and if you wait for the route before you cut tent-pins and purchase beasts of burden, you may have to carry your camp upon your own back, and you would soon get tired of that; just try!

A city of cotton walls, ephemeral though it be, has many imposing points, and, excepting the "Sunderbunds," is the most perplexing subject for topographical study in reference to theory, and finding one's way through in reference to practice. The "Seven Dials" pooh! at midnight, in a London November, that noted puzzle in brick and mortar, is perfectly lucid to brains of mediocre acumen; for you have lamp-posts, and lettered corners, and gin-shops, and *perhaps* a member of the metropolitan police who *might* be accidentally in the way, to guide you. But the cotton city on a treeless plain, is the real puzzle, depend on it. If all houses

were much of a size and shape; if all were painted white, and disposed with the same regularity; and if all inhabitants of cities were clad in scarlet, then cities would be equally distracting; but men not subject to military rule differ in taste, both as to houses and external garments; differences which mark their whereabouts, and are of a distinct use in this world.

The canvas city has its features, however, which acquire an expression from familiarity with it, just as we in time are able to distinguish the features of one negro from other physiognomies of a sable tint. And so the countenance of the canvas city is not an unmeaning blank, from very sameness; its expression is variable with circumstances, like the schoolboy who carries home with him the gratuity of a black eye. For instance, it may not be wholly on level ground; luck and the quartermaster-general may put your tent upon a sandy hillock, not much of an elevation on the aggregate, it is true, but of some value nevertheless; or in the spongy bottom of an earthy basin, not much of a ravine either, but, having on the contrary, qualifications widely at variance with the former. When the latter turns up on fortune's wheel, a prudent campaigner digs a trench around his tent, and cuts safety-valve canals at right angles with these, and in various directions towards any ground that may be lower than his own. He also heaps up earth against his cotton-walls, has occasional pulls upon his cordage, quite like a seaman, and tries the tent pins with his own hands. He longs for a barometer, and would watch it narrowly if he had one; whilst the regimental-quartermaster pitched upon the sand hillock, never bestows a thought upon that instrument, and wonders what you can want it for.

An attraction exists between camps and rain-clouds; a great camp rarely keeps many days in one spot with-

out a heavy fall. It is threatening even now, and unfortunately we are in the basin, and not upon the sand-hillock, and just in the rear are the sick of a thousand men, only as snug as straw of a very coarse grain can make them—the coarser the better when the rain comes. The quartermaster-general cares nothing for sick men—they are not in *his* department; the symmetry of a camp takes his eye out, and common-sense does “snooks” at him, harmlessly, because not noticed. But I wager the ghost of a gold piece that his own camp is now on a sand-hillock; I wish he had the charge of my sick men, and the best of luck in the treating of them.

But the rain is falling: all within the basin are down in their several mercurial columns; there are other basins in this great army, but this one being alone within observation we shall stick to it. Laughter is coming from the tents upon the high ground: it is astonishing how gay they are there. The basin is so gloomy and damp, that laughter seems indecorous within its influence, and lucifer-matches are obstinate on the subject of ignition. If it were not for little “Vixen” in the corner, with a rising generation of puppies a week old, and born under great difficulties, and even already making an agreeable domestic society, it would be impossible to keep one’s heart up, for the rain now falls heavily. It is just the night for thieving Sikhs to come to make a choice in horse-flesh; to cut their head and heel-gear and look out for long tails; to slip upon bare backs and gallop through the camp like wild Sioux, now and then coming upon tent-ropes, spread deceitfully, and as it were to entrap them.

Towards midnight the rain is in real earnest: it has completely stilled the noise-wave always present in a great camp. The camp-followers and domestics have

already stolen to the higher grounds, and left their master to weather it out. They are quite right, for *as yet* he is better off than they; in that respect the tables will be soon turned. But falling rain produces drowsiness, in virtue of its depressing qualities. In an indefinite short space of time a wild yell from the rear is heard, followed by horses in desperation, and backed by hard riders, which dash madly past: as they pass the splashing sound tells that the basin is not an empty vessel. Another half hour's slumber, and a whining noise of great distress fills the apartment, poor Vixen is afloat in her box, and very fearful about her puppies. Wet, soaked, and shivering, the first foot over the bedstead passes through eight inches of inundation. There are eight inches more to spare before the flood reaches the mattress, so taking the little things from the wreck the mother makes a spring from it, and, joyful at the deliverance, is guilty of the greatest indecorum on the subject of canine affection, considering the gravity of surrounding circumstances. At dawn the rain abates, having purloined seven of the eight inches on the legs of the bedstead or charpoy; overhanging quilts having soaked up a not inconsiderable amount, and entirely on the syphon principle. Vixen's box, a derelict, floats about with an air of perfect ease, and on a level with the bedding. There is scarcely a stir yet outside; the whole camp is as limp as wash-leather.

By-and-by, a sound of limbs wading through water, of a quagmire character, approached, followed by others which had come through many yards of inundation. When the bearer raised the purdah, or door, a lake of some pretensions spread out on all sides. It was far from an easy toilet that day, notwithstanding that it was done with as little attention to nicety as may

be; but when one has to transact that very necessary part of domestic life whilst standing in a brass basin, it partakes too much of a conjuring nature, and at least needs frequent repetition to become easy, convenient, and agreeable.

With great discernment as to present condition, and anxiety for future well-being, a set of hospital-bearers, with a "doolie," or litter, rescued me from my perilous situation, and placed me on a sandy bit. I never knew the exact value of sandy localities before. They had always been connected in my mind with cactus and desert plants in India, and wiry "bent" on the coasts of Britain, very limited in growing capabilities, and far below the general average of usefulness. Now, I would not have given a rood of sand for a square mile of the finest loam in that hollow. I looked towards my tent in the lake; nothing could be more desolate. The hospital-tents had been struck at midnight and without orders, and already a company of soldiers were bodily transplanting the canvas dwelling without taking it to pieces, as is the use and wont. I felt quite ready to dispute the value of the useful in opposition to all the ornamental of the quartermaster-general of the army; and I think he knew I did so, for I kept tent and hospital establishment quite out of the line from that day, and no troublesome inquiries were instituted. But many a good soldier got rheumatism from that damp basin, which he never shook off.

In a few days the clouds cleared away, and the weather became dry and crisp. Cheerful fires of kirbee stalks* crackled of nights, and twinkling stars peeped down upon the great camp like little holes of all sizes drilled without any plan in a plate of blued

* Stalks of a coarse grain, like Indian corn.

steel. Cold winds insinuated themselves through crannies, and any one who rejoiced in the possession of a pigmy stove was sure to be popular for the time being, especially if he would lend it for a small party. But mess-tables were poor affairs, and legs of mutton became wonderfully scarce, and horses got lean apace, from bad grass and a paucity of it; body-servants deserted, and no wonder: in sooth, it was no fun to them.

The horse is a great warrior when his blood is boiling. None can see him then without being reminded that "He paweth in the valley, and rejoiceth in his strength; he goeth on to meet the armed men; he mocketh at fear and is not affrighted, neither turneth he back from the sword. The quiver rattleth against him, the glittering spear and the shield. He swalloweth the ground with fierceness and rage; neither believeth he that it is the sound of the trumpet. He saith among the trumpets, Ha! ha! and he smelleth the battle afar off."

Mysterious noises, prevaricating and contradictory reports, precursors of coming strife, and then the *mêlée*: nerves of men and horses on the rack, muscles strained and harness rended, in getting guns through deep sand. Now they are over it, but spent, and their work not yet begun; yet there is a screw loose, for heavy guns, which none knew of being so near, take up the note of war, and the gay troop is weltering. Look upon this heap! the muzzle buried, the limber overset, the shattered wheel deep in the sand, the once fiery horse *hors de combat*, riders nearly cold already—lives sold for glory and a shilling a-day! Here is a warrior not yet dead—a dying horse—his nostrils sending out a column of steam mingled with minute blood-globules, and anon he struggles against

the choking harness collar, but spent with the exertion his head falls once more; he tries again, his filmy eyes brightening for the moment and becoming eloquent, for he snuffs at the body beside him—he knows that one. This sandy hollow, at seasons full of water, is now only moist with blood; it will be an easily dug grave for some. The gun and a squadron half fill it already. The masked guns were well pointed, and their goal a sure one, for the sandy hollow was a certain man-trap. But on a little way, and there are lesser groups; mark the three turbans on the ground, and grim features still with scorn upon them!—expressive of opinions even now—a cloven skull, a trunk quite headless, a third with a Birmingham steel up to the hilt upon the breastbone—stalwart carving at such a meal, the stereotyping of a red hand. And yet this was the work of a smooth cheek and a downy chin. When days of chivalry come back again, D'Urban Bligh shall surely have his spurs.

Heavy explosions have rended many miles of sky, and, answering to their pealing, clouds have hurriedly rolled down from distant mountains, and spreading over the field shroud the sights that are to be met with there. A fitting canopy! the only pall that many may receive, deepening with the coming night: an hour of dread to those not yet dead. Wounded men are ever near to death, which is as cold on that field as it is in a colder zone. Moreover, there are other horrors on fields that have been just fought; for monsters creep out then from cowards' hiding-places, and rifle the dead, and hasten the dying, and the next sun dawns on stiffened forms!

Here is a tent in which is laid out the last meal for the dying, and under the chaplain's surplice is a regulation blade. His horse is picketed to a tent-pin at

the door, and belt and pistols have a strange contrast with white lawn. The chaplain has been in the *mêlée*, and has cheered others to their work—he is now at his own calling, offering to pale lips bread and wine.

Within another and a larger tent there is more stir—for gleaming steel is still at its office, less bearable because used slowly, when the screws of men's frames are loose, and nerves are down like slackened fiddle-strings, and an occasional shriek pierces to a distance. Surgeons are poking for bullets which have entered at holes and have forgotten to come out at corresponding lesions, and have taken all kinds of queer roads, miraculously missing arteries by hair's-breadths, at other times splintering dense bone, the framework of men.

Listen! the "passing bell" is not heard on battle fields, but the muffled drum keeps time with the wailing of the "Dead March"—the "coronach" of many dead. A great conflict has been, the smoke of it has scarcely yet cleared away, for patches keep hanging over points redder than others, where carnage had pitched and offered up her most lavish sacrifice. Come, bury this pair! they *must* sleep together: side by side, they cannot be too near—the veteran sire, who covered his legion until lowered by a shot, and the son, the youth of the light curls, who stepped out and stood over him, the forlorn hope of an English home. They must sleep together: the wail of that march is not loud enough for *them*, and yet it may soon and blightingly reach a rent heart and a desolate hearth, where ears are ready to catch faint sounds. Bury them! and bury them together; for voices in the sky above the cloudy covering, in the clear ether, far, far beyond the battle-field, say to the old man and his son, "Come up hither!"

CHAPTER XXVI.

SEA-VIEWS AND SICK-CERTIFICATES.

SHIPPED off at a short notice, to save life by immediate attention to the liver, a man needs sympathy, but does not always get it. But there is something in sea air; or the hundred miseries consequent upon the sudden adoption of a sea-life would not so often revive hope in, and prove restorative to, the invalid. To a great enemy, who has done a man a grievous wrong, and disposed to wish him ill, which God forbid! one need go no further than wish him the same luck in a homeward passage that I had;—the same chance of life; the same feeling, mentally and bodily; the same comforts at bed and board; the same hard-hearted winds; the same month of August to sail in; the same teak ship, deficient in repairs, and aged as was the “Europa”; with the same water-casks on deck, rendering her too crank to beat successfully; the same closed hatches; the same ten days “hove-to” in the Bay of Bengal; the same knowledge that the Andamans are a lee shore, and that the natives are suspected, and with

good grounds, of cannibalism—a suggestion of a harassing nature to some folks; the same daily announcement of the fact at noon, that by dead-reckoning the ship is five miles further from her destination than at the same hour yesterday; and the same lady passenger with her five little pledges, having a perfect cacoëthes for attention, and attachment to beating upon tin canisters.

Three months after leaving the pilot, and with a blazing sky overhead, point, and headland, and breaker-laved reef of the rugged Mauritius successively greeted the lazy “Europa.” We wanted water and stock, for both were exhausted; and we crept doggedly into the bay like a hound that deserves a flogging and knows it. Two enormous sharks prowled about the rudder chains; wary old fellows, far too experienced to bolt pork with a hook in it, or a red-hot brick disguised in a tarpaulin. They had haunted the bay and harbour of Port Louis for years, attending the entrance of every ship, and now and then dining on a midshipman. A Government boat came alongside, with two officials, who demanded a bill of health. The boatmen seemed to know the sharks; and one of the latter they called “Peter,” and thereupon the recognition was mutual, for “Peter” made a dive under the boat flourishingly, as much as to say, “If I get anything, I’ll give you halves.” The sharks of the Mauritius were noted at that time. I don’t know how it may be now; but the breed was not confined to the bay. I nearly hooked one upon dry land; but in hooking him I hooked a Tartar, for he sent me back to the “Europa” without a shilling; his jaws were enormous, he made no difficulty in bolting any thing. The kind-hearted skipper laughed when I told him, and recommended me to return to the “Europa”; although he had no great cause for laugh-

ing, for at that moment he should have been in England. It is not every temper that can get up a laugh under these circumstances.

But before taking this advice I lingered at the jetty, and, borrowing a few dollars from the skipper, I invested them in a cage of birds, those tiny members of the feathered race called "Avadavid." The emancipated negro who sold them looked much in need of custom, but I could have bought them cheaper in England, and saved myself the trouble of importation. The feathered fairies served to enliven my cabin, for they sung during the day and fluttered during the night, pursued by hunting cockroaches.

An old Indiaman, from England with troops, was moored a cable's-length from the "Europa." Strings of drying shirts ornamented the rigging. They reminded me of a necklace of human teeth belonging to an Ashantee chief, of which I had seen a drawing; for a white shirt hanging to a rope is no bad representation of a molar, and the arms do duty for fangs; the blue shirts reminded me of certain mercurial effects on my own maxillary department. Instinctively I touched a molar, and it shook; but by-and-by shirts and Guernsey-frocks disappeared from stays and shrouds, and other movements indicative of preparation went on, and before sunset the poop and quarter-deck of the huge vessel was shut in with awnings, and flags, and spare sails, for a ball was to be that night on board the "Ava."

As the evening advanced, and nothing of the shore but the serrated outline could be seen, and the twinkle of lights upon it, it looked against the clear sky like the spiny back of a strange shell-fish. At length sounds of brazen instruments passed over the water. They were well heard in the "Europa," and even light footsteps keeping time to measured strains that were

new to me, although stale enough in England. I did not regret declining the invitation; for I had the better part on the poop of the "Europa," on which I smoked my cheroot and listened to the revelry; and several hours passed thus. The moon arose, and "Peter Botte," tipped with its light, looked down upon the ship-dotted bay, which speedily became distinctly visible. It was a sultry night; the revellers in the "Ava" did not mind that; no doubt they must have liked it, for many bouyant hearts were there. God speed those light hearts in the "Ava."

In the meantime the sky above the spiny island became darkened, as if a cloud had arisen from the ravines of "Peter Botte." It ascended rapidly—there was not wind to stir even a withered leaf. Whilst looking at this phenomenon the officer of the watch called out—"See that all is ready to let go the best bower!" and then dived into the cuddy to examine the barometer. On coming on deck again he did not give the order, but muttered:

"I never saw so dense a cloud rise so rapidly, and the barometers take no notice of it; but here it is, any way; we must take it, be what it may."

In another moment it was upon us. I expected nothing but an Isle-of-France hurricane. Darkness had shut out the land, and even the "Ava" failed to loom through it;—but it was upon us, a dense cloud without any wind to blow it. A colony of cockroaches had migrated from the sugar factories to the shipping! The "Europa" became clad with them, for her sides had that day been refreshed with a coating of coal-tar, and the nimble insects found themselves in a quagmire. The mass of them, however, alighted on the decks and rigging; we had got the last of the batch. In a few minutes the sky cleared, and the moon broke through.

I rushed below, and the rays, striking the port, disclosed a battalion entering thereby. Afraid to attract them by a light, I sprung into my swinging cot. Pah! pah! 80° on the thermometer-scale, and cockchafers racing over me; now and then sticking among my hair, and compelling me to liberate them with my fingers. I tossed about for an hour. I wanted to see how much cockroach society I could endure, but I got parched and feverish. Hearing the steward in the cuddy at that unusual hour, I asked him, turning the jalousie, for a glass of water. In reply he said:—

“Please, sir! we’ve got nothing but cockroaches.”

The “Europa” was but thirty hours at her anchorage by the bell-buoy. She had wasted too much time already. A hurricane tipped us with his tail off Madagascar. It was a mere tip, and rather pleasant, for it cooled the air, and made the cockroaches keep to the seams, and spun us like a drunken teetotum to the latitude of the Cape, where we remained six weeks to get sober again. To one roused just after sunrise, in a November morning, Table Mountain is a gladsome sight; the shadow of the hill was performing its ablution in the Bay, and the white-window-speckled houses of Cape Town looked like a shepherd’s plaid of a large pattern. The atmosphere was clear, elastic, and invigorating, and a promise of health floated in every airy particle. The tropics and their pestilence could not reach this place. The “Europa” passed between Robbin Island and Green Point, and Table Bay lay open like a sheet of tissue-paper. But keep clear of Green Point! it is easily rubbed against; and it is not made of soft soap, I can tell you, for I once saw a ship’s bottom which had slightly touched it, and it looked like a plum-pudding with rocky fragments deeply set in it. The pilot, therefore, looked over the side anxiously; we saw the

lurking point a couple of fathoms off, and as many under water; and when we had passed it the pilot gave out a long breath. He had held it rather beyond the natural period, just in the way a soldier bears a flogging. His anxiety was now dissipated, and he pointed out, in a graphic manner peculiar to ocean-roaming men, several noted spots; not that they were close at hand and visible—several were, indeed, many miles off—but they were connected with the Colony, and, of course, *his* property in one sense. “It was there the gallant ‘Doncaster’ was driven ashore, and on this hand the ‘Atlas’ went down at her anchors.” Doubtless he will now add to these, “and it was there that on the sinking decks of the ‘Birkenhead’ four hundred British warriors, at a word of command, and when many might have saved themselves by disobedience, with toe to toe and shoulder to shoulder, and with the precision of a parade, marched upon their unknown path to eternity!” The graves of these argosies are watered by the salt tears of the ocean, and winds from the great southern seas moaned the lullaby of the lost—the still wept!

Table Bay was before us, in its May-day; its table ridge like the hugest quarry. Had those great giants which, according to the nursery historian, lived in Cornwall, known of this place, they might have liked to work it. I was at home here, and soon after landing I wandered towards Green Point; for there, I learnt, a quaint individual who dealt in curiosities lived. The Bay sparkled; ships bound for every land sailed to and fro. The merry boatmen of the place hoisted white sails, and skimmed along as if they were taking the cream off the bay-water, if there had been any. This, however, is only found when Table Hill puts on her “nightcap” of clouds and mists—when the wind

sets in from the north-west, when vessels shift their riding-ground, strike their upper spars, and moor with many anchors. That piece of water is then no harbour; ships strain themselves, and iron links are riven; and men's lives hinge upon the holding of an anchor-fluke.

I sat upon a wave-smoothed rock; the distant tinkle of a capstan-paul, as some ship got home her chain, came over the sleeping bay. It brought music with it, for every clanking fathom told of "homeward bound." Her topsails were already loose; and I gazed at her until the white winged albatross that swooped round Robbin's Island was not more airy-like than she.

A sperm whale was spouting in the bay, his brown back seen at intervals above the water, and skeletons of his species were on the beach at a little distance off. An ingenious artizan might have framed a goodly craft from these ribs and backbones: there was a queer mingling of a ship-yard and an anatomical room conveyed to my mind as my eye caught them.

On looking up, a signal blew out from the flag-staff on the "Lion's Head." It was a vessel from England; and her "royals" were peeping over Green Point already. I knew that she would take half an hour to creep to the anchorage.

Just as she brought up, I gained the jetty, usually a busy locality, unusually so at this moment. Cases, and hampers, and garden produce lay profusely around; waggons took airings upon the beach, and huge teams of dozens of oxen were evidently trifling with beams of wood of no great dimensions. Semi-Hottentots and Negroes, no longer slaves, flourished whips longer and stronger than goodly-sized fishing-rods. An "olla podrida" of languages surrounded me as I sat upon a capstan-purchase. I tried to separate them as well

as I could, and soon gave it up as a hopeless task; for the Negro invaded the vernacular of the Bosjesman, and Oordu amalgamated indifferently with the Doric of semi-Dutch. It was not these, however, that I had come to hear or to see; but to watch the landing of the "outward bound" in yonder Indiaman, who, with an impatience that none but Indian passengers can display, were fast approaching the jetty.

The boats bumped against it. A general and a judge, two colonels and a captain—had each borne his insignia of office on the front of his silk hat, he could not have designated himself more correctly than did the outward man severally, and yet they all patronized silk hats—a manufacture I despised when a member of the "low-room." Three subalterns followed; they all calculated on some lucky step having promoted them to "companies" during the voyage; and yet two of the trio were far out in their reckoning. A sallow youth from Haileybury College, who found great inconvenience from deficiency of nose on which to hang his spectacles, pioneered the judge's wife, who had half-a-dozen nice young ladies under her wing, whom she sheltered like a brood of chickens. And then a whole "ruck" of cadets sprung up the jetty-stairs, let loose upon society at Cape Town, full of glee and bantering, and unwearied by their offers to take charge of innumerable trifles belonging to the ladies. The general and colonels had renewed their youth in old England; and, with as little reflection as the cadets, poked their noses under youthful cottage-bonnets, and diversified this juvenility by referring to the boatmen about for the date of the last "line step," and the precise condition of the "frontier states" in India. And they expressed no interest in the Kaffirs.

I naturally reverted to the change which a tropical clime had wrought in me. I had landed on this same jetty, sanguine as the groups I now saw. Present gaiety, rapid advancement, ultimate success, flickered before me as it now did in the field of their vision. And then came a twinge in my right shoulder which told me that, in one respect, I was not the wiry man I then was when I took a part in such a scene, although still one of a very few survivors who had sat together at the cuddy-table of the broad bilged "Bamboozlebury."

In the footsteps of this party, I drew towards the fashionable and most prominent street of Cape Town. I felt myself dogging them, and was almost fearful of being observed to be so doing. At length a young gentleman without a beard, but who evidently knew something of town-life, caught me poaching on the privacy of the party; for he turned to a ditto of himself, and observed:

"Snob! vewy wespectable Snob! an't he, Jeffe, my pippin?"

Not deeming it absolutely necessary to indicate that I had appreciated this observation of the rising generation, I repaired to a window of my own apartments. Here I awaited the scene that was sure to follow: carriages, gigs, and saddle-horses, were paraded in an inconceivable short time, at all the hotel-doors. African and Hottentot Jehus, with peaked caps of shaving manufacture, sat upon the coach boxes; shawls and bonnets fluttered for a short space before carriage-steps; the shaving-capped coachmen got the word to start, whereupon they proved themselves to be expert in whip-cracking, beyond anything imaginable; and to each carriage, four well-ribbed-up Cape-bred bays bounded along with a bright and plunging gallop.

With the reins almost loose upon the horses' backs,

Jehu used his *fishing-rod* with both hands, as usual, and "Jeffe," who sat beside him with a neck-tie of intense blue, producing a cornet-à-piston, put it to his lips and treated the inhabitants of Cape Town to a few choice bars of a popular melody, then in special favour with *fast* young gentlemen, and which I have since learnt, goes by the name "Susannah! don't you cry for me."

If Mr. Jeffe meant to infer that there was any chance of Cape Town shedding tears at his departure, he certainly was mistaken; for the young ladies in the carriage laughed most uproariously, *for young ladies*. Jehu's speed of travelling appeared to interfere with Jeffe's execution, for the notes came out most irregularly, and in perfect violation of all kinds of musical taste, when applied to brass instrumentation. Numerous hired horses with outside passengers, whose gifts of equitation were exceedingly variable, kept pace with the carriages; the *tout ensemble* resembling certain travelling equestrian companies, at present in vogue in England. Long legs and short stirrups, and short legs with long, were provokingly prevalent; pallid faces, at long intervals, bespeaking a want of confidence in jockeyship, contrasted with the general laughing and careless countenances of the mass.

It was a desperate charge which those cadets made through the streets of Cape Town. Hottentots, negroes, and ladies, of Dutch extraction and development, went down before them in twos and threes. Jehu turned the corners by the playing his fishing-rod incessantly about his horses' ears; and they disappeared on the road to Wynberg, as such parties always do, I think in virtue of a law.

The "Europa" had hitherto been an unlucky ship, and somewhat lavish of a furlough-man's days and weeks. The skipper, who bore these disappoint-

ments like a marine martyr, quite at variance with the general run of salt-water temperaments under similar trials, informed me with a serio-comic expression, that the "Europa," having passed her grand climacteric some years before, was exhibiting signs of a ripe old age. Her planks showed fine specimens of the auger-worm; her ribs were suspected of the dry rot; and moreover, in heaving-in the anchor at Port Louis, the fluke had caught in her "fore foot," and damaged that member considerably. As I knew that freedom from auger-worms, sound ribs, and efficient feet, both fore and aft, were highly desirable, I recommended him to put the "Europa" into the doctor's hands, for ships need patching up when injured, or their constitutions become affected. The shipwright declared that such a worn-out frame as the "Europa's" was not so easily set up again, for every new plank unseated an old one. A telescope in the shape of a millstone! and, looking through, it seemed as if I might have knocked out new holes in old constitutions, by patching up flaws with too strong materials. I watched the "Europa's" treatment from day to day. It was like attendance upon a clinical lecture—one at the bedside of a patient. The shipwright thought me curious in his craft; he did not see how it applied to my own; but I dipped into the pathological anatomy of the "Europa"—pah! we must have rolled down from the Isle of France at least, "widout a linch-pin." And not a rat was to be seen, a bad sign; they must have left us at the island, for they were plentiful enough when the "Europa" lay in the Hooghly. They had perhaps some inkling of the hurricane, and had knowingly changed quarters with the cockroaches. Be that as it may, it was not pleasant to dwell upon; and when the skipper came to know it, he put on a grave aspect; and yet he was a plucky fellow, and

could have made any craft spin through the waters, except the leaden-heeled "Europa," whose copper hung in shreds, as pliable and nearly as easily made to quiver by the passing breeze, as the gold leaf of a sign-painter, or the green leaf of the aspen.

CHAPTER XXVII.

MORE SEA VIEWS AND A LITTLE BIT OF LAND.

BUT a word or two still about the Cape, before embarking; for my powers of observation were restricted on my first visit. Nature was in a strange mood when she formed Table Mountain. It is a perpendicular cliff on its Bay aspect—one half of a rended mountain. Where then is the other? it must have slipped into the sea, and the advance-guard of the dreadful avalanche peeped up again at Robbin Island; as much as to say, “All is gone to the bottom but this little bit.”

To the south-west of Table is a twin mountain, the several points of which bear the names of “the Lion’s Head” and “the Lion’s Rump;” and from the latter, like a tail, juts out the sward-covered Green Point. Another cone-shaped hill called “the Devil’s Head” guards Table hill on the north-east. Looking from Green Point across the bay, a long, low, swampy-looking tract of several miles, bleak and uninteresting, bounded by a range of low hills, produces a “Pontine” effect, which is added to by the peaked outline of the Blue Mountains in the distance, and the Grecian observatory placed upon it. Nor does the passing team of oxen and the waggon drawn

by them, detract from the idea, at least in a sunny day.

The patronymics of the Vans are becoming fewer every lustrum, and the day may yet come when "Van Hogshead" may be little less mythical than "Vanderdekken;" for that famed Dutchman has not been much seen or heard of, of late years, and has probably changed his cruising-ground. I should grieve to see it; the substantial "Van Hogsheads," with countenances shining as bright with hospitality as their oaken floors and twisted balustrades, gone! Where then would English passengers beg for gratuitous glasses of Constantia, or find a host whose politeness and temper can see out the third ship-load of mendicants in one day?

Lloyd's agent declared the "Europa's" complaint to be a "total breaking up of the constitution." She was therefore condemned, and those on board of her had to shift for themselves. The hint given by the rats was too strong for Lloyd's—they could not stand it; so much for sailing from the Hooghly at a season when good ships are usually scarce. I have never doubted the correctness of Lloyd's diagnosis, but I wish that that gentleman had peeped into her condition at Calcutta. It would have saved me a little coin and a whole back-burden of trouble; but the rats had not then expressed their sentiments upon this point, and that might have made a great difference.

But I had, with others, been detained a sufficient space to allow the season to overtake us, and at length came a frigate-built ship, homeward bound, which had left the Hooghly only five weeks since, and was in such a hurry that she had only time to say, "I have a cabin or two vacant, for their late owners sleep beneath the restless waves." Having no dread thereanent, I took one of them.

She was a noble ship, and before reaching the Downs she made a frigate of England admit that the Admiralty's parchment cannot make a vessel sail. I sat upon the poop of the "Ramillies" as we ran out of Table Bay; and a heavy dew falling, I said to an old General, who lay upon his back on a skylight top and threatened to sleep there:

"Four bells! General; and Cape dews are heavy at times!"

"Sir!" exclaimed the General in a semi-upright position, which he suddenly assumed, and with an air of dignity upon being thus interfered with: "Sir! there is no chance of *my* sleeping; the want of it is *my* complaint; I am going to England to look for it; I could not get any in India."

"A thousand pardons, General; but I once saw you take an uncommon nap with three inches of water under your backbone. You couldn't do it now, I suppose?"

"Perhaps not, sir! I haven't had a minute's sleep for three years, you may therefore make yourself easy on my account."

I had, by the merest accident, touched a very fine string in the General's nervous system, and without further remonstrance I sought the awning-cabin on the larboard side, and made a pretty clever board of it, as seamen say, for I was only awoke by the preparations at dawn for washing decks; and just as a swashing sound denoted that the first bucket of water had been expended, I heard the officer of the watch say:—

"General! I'm sorry to disturb you, but we are going to wash decks. The dew has been heavy, and you are rather damp already; but you *do* sleep soundly, *very* soundly; I hope you are refreshed."

The General had taken a nap of eight good hours by the bells of the "Ramillies." The skylight on the poop

was his favourite place of repose, except in very bad weather. It became by common consent his private property, and the man at the wheel would at times in compassion throw a piece of tarpaulin over him; and called him "the hard-a-weather cove."

A week brought us to the cinder called St. Helena. As we passed close under the cliffs, we might have pitched a biscuit upon them. Skippers of ships are fond of this close-shaving; I only wonder that they so seldom graze the skin. We recognised the flag-ship, as we passed the mouth of the bay, by respectfully hoisting the "trading jack." Another week to Ascension, which looked, if it hadn't been surrounded by mists, and was therefore invisible, like a Hottentot coachman's cap turned mouldy. Another week to the equator, where we fell in with two outward-bound ships and three waterspouts, and upon the very back of which (I mean the Equator's), the "Ramillies" took a sudden and very profound slumber of three days and a half, during which time the Captain, taking to his starboard awning-cabin, neither ate, nor drank, nor stirred from it, until the sails were once more filled like balloons. This was an improvement of manners during marine trials, and vastly superior to anathematizing the eyes and limbs of all parties within reach, as being somewhat responsible for calms and head-winds.

Another week and we ran cleverly, and at night, through the misty Azores. It is wonderful to see the good temper with which an active seaman will do this, which is a brag of the compass and chronometer, a nice adjustment between them; I hope they won't quarrel. How the "Ramillies" ever found her way safely through that bit, scoring off ten knots an hour with the air as thick as buttermilk, I have never been able to make out.

Another week, being only the fifth, and we were at the mouth of the English Channel, as hard-hearted a bit of water as there is anywhere; and then came the first serious check that the "Ramillies" had met with since leaving the Hooghly. It is certainly wonderful to notice how happily these first-class ships make to themselves fair winds; a subaltern accounted for it "in the liberal allowance of champagne on board." But easterly winds blew inhospitably in the Channel. Somehow it never is a fair wind there; for when we did creep up it was by snatches; boats from Deal and other Channel ports hung in our wake for days. They reminded me of the sharks in the bay at Port Louis, and they kept up the character to the very last, for, when at anchor in a fog, somewhere between Dungeness and Dover, they came down to five guineas from an original demand of twenty, to put the General's party on shore, a distance they said of seven miles. Within ten minutes after leaving the counter of the "Ramillies," we passed between the pier-heads of a harbour. Turning to the old gentleman, who looked rather astonished at this speedy transportation to dry land:

"General! you must have been *asleep* when you made that bargain."

"I think I must have been," replied the old man.

A magnificent hotel stared us in the face but a stone's cast off, and we, in time, made our way there; General and lady, and little Rosa, black ayah, and young Hopeful; and taking little Rosa's hand, I listened to the former. Boatmen, porters, and Custom House officers, made a successful onslaught on the bluff old soldier, and in no time reduced to the consistency of wash-leather, limp from soaking, a man who had thrashed a whole brigade of the Khalsa. The action was conducted briskly during the advance to the hotel, and the General find-

ing himself hard pressed, gladly took refuge in a great entrance-hall, in which a whole regiment of little bells, all duly numbered, were conspicuous, with rows of pillars in duplicate down either side, probably placed there for the waiters to lean upon, for every pillar was so occupied, except two, perhaps the property of "boots" and chambermaid. The animated pillars looked on at the fight, but took no part in it. The General's blood was all above his cravat, and apoplexy close at hand: the boatmen and porters as cool as water-melons; for they only wanted an extra guinea for carrying some five or six trunks from the harbour. In his extremity, the General appealed to the waiters; not a white neckcloth nor a silk stocking among them had any idea of the usual charge; the same being evidently most unusual. The General's lady looked very pale, and little Rosa was weeping.

As I settled the business for half a crown, the shark said: "Sir, if it ha'n't a been for you, I'se 'ad done old Cockywax!"

At this point the animated pillars thawed, and conducted us to, I must admit, a most cheerful apartment; and I was glad of it, for the General stood in need of comfort.

"Walford! *now* I know what that is which cadets call 'home sickness:' it's very sick of home I am. I wish we could get back to the 'Ramillies' and the skylight, or we must entrench our camp. I had positively no idea that things could be in such a state in England; they absolutely will be charging a guinea for permitting a man to look at his own nose."

I stood charring my boot-toes on the rib of the grate, and studying a card of prices over the mantelpiece, which I thought moderate; and I was much pleased with a "*Nota bene*," that "waiters and cham-

bermaids, being charged for in the bill, are prohibited from asking gratuities or remuneration for services," an announcement the more gratifying, as the waiters wore white cravats, patent leather upon their toes, speckled silk stockings, and black small-clothes strapped down to extremity. The particular individual who devoted himself to the General's party added to these exterior embellishments a lisping refinement, which no traveller, with any pretensions to liberality, would grudge paying for. And then the chambermaid was thoroughly from Paris: as she spoke to the General's lady you would have taken her mouth for a little clipping machine, the words dropped from it so shreddy like. But the attenuated state of mine own purse somewhat curbed my individual feelings of liberality, and a great sense of lightheartedness followed the perusal of the "*Nota bene.*" It was a trifling improvement in these arrangements, that I felt confident of ultimately making the fortune of the proprietor. I drew the General's attention to it, who huskily muttered:

"Thank God, Walford! there is some comfort in that."

Our first dinner was most satisfactory, and had something to do with the remarkably good night's rest we had; and next morning, such a breakfast—such cream for tea, and such eggs; they could not be better—that was impossible. The General manifestly appreciated every article; his home-sickness was waning—he almost at one time began to rub his hands, and then said: "If I only had my hookah now!"

"I think it would add to other incumbrances, General; but as we start by express in half an hour, suppose I act as treasurer to the party, for here comes the waiter, bill in hand?"

I placed the amount in the waiter's hand, not troubling myself to examine items minutely. The sum total was not immoderate, as these things go; and this done, I put the bill into my pocket, and thought of calculating the railway fare for the party, aware during the process that the waiter still lingered behind my chair. I began to "smell a rat," as the phrase is, when a lisping—

"Oh! Thir, we donth tholithet, but are permitted to *accept*."

"And a very convenient understanding that must be for you; it's very kind of you, indeed, to mention it," I replied.

I had still half-a-sovereign in my hand; "bright-toes" eyed it with a simper, that plainly said—

"What oncommon green gentry you old Indians be."

I kept chucking the little coin up and then catching it.

"That half-thovering is as good as mine already," passed through the sensorium of "bright-toes."

I referred again to the bill, and found three half-crowns under the item "Attendance." My position was very difficult and trying; I had no precedent to guide me, and time was nearly up.

"Suppose we refer the matter to the landlord; be so good as call him."

"Oh, no, thir! no occathion, thir; quite a mistake, thir! very sorry indeed, thir!"

For all practical purposes the "Nota bene" was "gammon."

He who takes a furlough after a lengthened absence from his native country, finds that men and manners are sufficiently changed meanwhile to be, at the least, inconvenient. But the old gentleman who dares it

after forty years, or even less, had done better to have settled in Mussoorie. The man who saw a steamer for the first time only ten years ago, on an Indian river, must doubtless feel out of water when on a railway train, and ten to one the electric telegraph is too much for his nerves. He is as much a "Johnny Raw" as when at eighteen years of age he made a crowd of Hindoos laugh by plunging feet foremost into a palanquin, and sitting down upon the shelf.

The General and lady, little Rosa and I, black ayah and baby, just filled up the carriage. The bell rang, and the engine gave a groan, and then a "thut," another groan, and then "thut—thut—thut,"—another groan, and then "thut-thut-thut-thut-thut" in perpetuity, and away we whisked distractedly along the verge of the cliff, perhaps the giddiest piece of rail in all England; quite a brag, indeed, to venture on.

"Very pleasant! delightful mode of travelling!" said the General, rubbing his hands.

"A very awkward thing if a pebble were on the line here," I exclaimed, not supposing the thing was at all likely; but the General was more sanguine, and he fidgetted rather, and looked a shade paler than was his wont. At this moment we entered a tunnel. Little Rosa, who was standing at the window looking out, dropped down instantly at my feet.

"Oh! my dear husband! Oh! my dear husband!" screamed little Rosa, whose ideas of husbands in general must have been crude, if anything—but the quotation is quite correct—and, gathering herself up, she poked her little head out, and again shouted—

"Oh! my dear husband!"

There was a great back-draught of wind, and the sparks rained upon imprudently-exposed heads. Little Rosa's ideas of tunnels were not more mature than

her ideas of husbands, and from sheer terror she had sunk down, impressed with a notion that such a mode of travelling, and such a road of travelling, had conducted her some distance towards a very awful place. Her first thoughts, therefore, were of her papa; but the English tongue being only imperfectly acquired during a twelve weeks' voyage, in her anguish she substituted "husband" for "papa."

Heads were poked from various carriages, and of all classes; the phenomenon of a little girl of nine years singing out for a "dear husband" was more than they could bear, and they had not recovered themselves when we halted at the first station. The married ladies looked irritable, and could not believe their ears; bachelors looked credulous, and men of many married years put on an air approaching to indignant; all took it as a sarcasm against matrimony—whilst it was only a little girl who knew Hindostanee better than English. I placed little Rosa on my knee; the cloud passed by, and left her fair face as sunny as before;—may it never be again obscured by such a terrible cloud as that!

We sped to London; two hours and a quarter did it. Last time I travelled such a distance in England I was nine hours about it, and sat behind four thorough-breds, which scored off their allotted twelve miles without once shirking their gallop, and thereby marking time with a precision not surpassed on the crack lines of "rail." For the "road" has since then been *all* down-hill; the figures have grown out of the mile-stones, which are never renewed; there are no way-side inns, with swinging sign-boards, where horses changed, held by stable-boys who never would use their braces legitimately, but allowed them to hang down, repudiating use, and simply assuming the ornamental.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

NOT AT HOME ALTHOUGH IN ENGLAND.

AFTER seeing the General and his household depart for the west end I thought I should feel more at home at some "Swan with Three Necks," or other antiquated hostelry of a similar stamp, one or two of which establishments I had a faint recollection. I found one not very far from Cornhill, but the whole establishment had an air of its "occupation" being "gone." The yard, all surrounded by tiers of spiral pillars which had half-hourly sent forth a fully equipped coach-and-four, was reduced to two daily pairs and an unicorn. The rail had swallowed up the rest.

I was not long, however, in discovering how great a desert London may be to a stranger. I have felt less lonely with an hostile country on one side, and five hundred miles of sand on the other, and the nearest white face two hundred off, than I did on my first evening. It was a metropolitan feature which I could not appreciate at twenty-two; but now that its double had been checked off in seams upon the facial dial by that truthful index of time the nose, the desert nature

of an overgrown city was the first sentiment which tapped at my hired apartment door, and welcomed me so intrusively, that it was nothing more than Paul-Pryism in disguise. I thought of half-price at the Adelphi, and ringing the bell, I asked the waiter if a certain great actor was still upon the boards; it was doubtless a silly question, and I apologised to the waiter for disturbing him.

On the following morning I thought of leaving my card at Mr. Strutt's, and I did so; but that gentleman was not there, he had many years before been gathered to his fathers. His remembrance, even, was not so deeply cut in the hearts of his successors as to prevent them smiling at me. I felt just as Rip Van Winkle did when he returned from his nap on the Katskills, and a young clerk, up to city 'cuteness, and with the intuitiveness for which his class is remarkable, piercing my thoughts, said, as I turned to go:

"Sir, after all, a living donkey is better than a dead lion."

I then tried to ferret out the bland Mr. Funny; I felt sure that *he* would be gratified with a visit; but he, I found, had been totally blotted out from the parish of Westminster. On returning to the city I found upon my table a very kind note from Mr. Hardfile. I had not thought of calling upon this gentleman, but the disappointments of the morning made me rejoice to think that at least one in this great city had noted my return to my native country, and I passed along to the old office hastily. I presented my card, and was immediately ushered into Mr. Hardfile's apartment.

A gentleman of thirty-five, as unlike Mr. Hardfile as possible, stood up and heartily pump-handled my

right hand and arm for about a minute. I thought I had not had the pleasure of his acquaintance. I had only one end of a chain; but, on drawing largely on my memory, a boy of thirteen, to whom I had given a crown for seeing my traps on board the "Bamboozlebury," gradually resolved himself into the other end of the chain, all between being a vacuum. Mr. Hardfile had retired many years before, having accumulated a competency, and sold his name for the benefit of others; and the note of welcome was only in the way of business. I turned to go, and went.

I stepped into Lloyd's, and there I ascertained the names of the owners of the "Europa." At their office I found a letter addressed to me three months old, and that letter informed me of the departure of my nearest relation for a somewhat lengthened Continental residence, with a programme of six weeks at one place, six days at another, and so on; I calculated these steps up to three months; then giving an extra month for contingencies, I came to the conclusion that, if all went well, the party *might* be in Brussels. At ten P.M. of that day I was on board a steamer for Ostend, which was well pressed out with return Belgians, inclusive of a Countess.

Rain fell that night, and we sat packed round the saloon like volumes on a book-shelf. It was steamy, and by morning we were done, the Countess particularly, who sang a lamentation in German, which made no great impression on the others; but as a swell from the eastward prevailed, and oxygen was scarce, in me it created the sensation of a passage in the 'tween-decks of a slaver. Next day at noon, when the sand-hillocky steeple-graduated coast of Belgium presented itself, we found that the air of that saloon had exerted

an astounding effect on the growth of the beard, from which I deduced the scientific inference that young gentlemen who are anxious upon that subject, might find good results from passing occasional rainy evenings in Ostend packets; and that carbonic acid is the staff of hirsute life, a morceau of science which I claim specially as my own discovery; and hope, that if any philosopher reads a paper upon the subject before any learned society, he will not omit to acknowledge its source.

The railway train was detained on our account, and having no time for rectifying the vegetative effects of the last twelve hours, I got into a luxurious carriage, the back of which was ingeniously padded with chamois leather, which seemed to accommodate itself to all kinds of shapes of back bones, the consequence of which was, that I fell into a nap sufficiently refreshing and wherewithal so sound, that on my arrival in Brussels at six P.M., I thought of writing a whole volume of observations upon the condition of Belgium in an agricultural sense. So much for sticking one's rail ticket conspicuously in the hatband. The ticket-takers took compassion and the hint, and let me pass through Belgium in a dream. May their shadows increase until they cover as much ground as that of the great crusade-leading Godfrey, who in bronze did me the honour of holding up a banner all night in front of my chamber-window, and continuing that attention during my short stay in that locality! The Crusader is evidently calling upon the Belgians to accompany him to the wars; I hope the bronze warrior may find less cause of complaint than the iron had.

Next morning I was at the passport-office and police, but no name such as that I was in search of was known in Brussels. Thinking it as well to consider my future

route in all its bearings, I determined to linger in Brussels for a few days.

The capital of Belgium is a bewildering city, and far from fragrant. I climbed steep streets and unwittingly came out three several times at the same point. Close to this was an arcade of shops—the fashionable resort of Belgian officers, who in the matter of waists are very tight-laced, and far from agreeable in an anatomical point of view, which, with the remarkable freedom from crease and wrinkle of the blue uniform, gives them a beetly appearance. Determined that the third visit to this locality in one day was enough, I boldly struck out in a new line, and soon found myself in an avenue of a park, and taking a prominent path I arrived at a tank with a fountain. The tank was stagnant, but teeming with golden perch to an extent almost beyond belief. There was no room for performing fishy evolutions, and the perch had become obese in consequence, and had acquired a reptile sort of motion, which anything with a fin ought to have been ashamed of. This unpleasant sight was presided over by some six or eight busts of hideous taste and proportions, and the fountain had expired from thirst.

Wandering now at random I gained what I was sure was the boulevard. It had a sufficiently strong resemblance to the Parisian promenade of that name, as to require no pointing out; but the rows of trees were ill fed, and the roadway was black and coal-dusty. As I approached one of the gates, the *Porte de Namur*, the keepers were in discussion with a little lady of middle age in mourning, who had got out of a cab which still waited, in order the more efficiently to conduct matters. She spoke very fluently; the keeper, cab-driver, a wasp in rifle green, and a few peasants, listened attentively; the lady continued; it then

appeared evident that they did not understand the lady. Almost in tears she at length addressed herself to me.

"It is an inexpressible comfort, Madam," I replied, "to listen to French that one can understand."

"I am delighted to hear you say so," exclaimed the lady, in very good English: "these men don't understand *my* dialect. Cannot *you* make them understand? I want my valise carried to No.— Glacis de Waterloo," said the little lady.

"My French, like yours, is too pure for these gentlemen; but I will carry your valise myself," said I, lifting up the valise with one hand, and taking off my hat with the other.

I had a rough idea of the Glacis de Waterloo from a pocket-map I carried. So taking things quite easily, we trudged on together towards the next gate, close to which we found it. In that lady, therefore, I have a staunch friend if I knew where to find her; and when the door was closed upon her and her little valise, I felt sure of that.

From this gate the road to Waterloo leads. I took it for a few hundred yards, then breaking off to the left I traversed the undulating suburb of Ixelle. Thence I don't know how or where I wandered, but at length I found myself near to a small graveyard, which, from the predominance of English names on the tombstones, I rightly conjectured to be the Protestant place of burial. It seemed to be a neglected place; and not entirely without an object, I entered. I had a friend lying within it, but I knew this from report only, and the stone plants had thriven there; *they* always seem to thrive; with *them* we never hear of failing harvests; devoid of culture and cramped for room, *they* never languish or decay.

I could not find the stone I looked for, but I sat down to rest awhile and bethink me of whither I should bend my steps, to Paris or the Rhine towns? It was a mild day for the season, and a daisy peeped out here and there, and plainly said: "I see you, and I dare say you wonder to see me here;" the surprise, perhaps, was mutual.

Whilst intent upon these trifles, a party entered the grave-gard; they did not disturb me, but kept on the further side. Still there was no great distance between us. A gentleman somewhat beyond middle life, a blooming mother of ten years less, and a very handsome youth of seventeen seasons, all serious in step and object, contrasted with the others, a beauteous boy and girl of nine and ten, and a fairy of five years. I looked for wings upon her little shoulders, but she had not any; she will have them some day, but may it be many, many years before that time!

I was sufficiently removed to observe them without intrusion. The father led them to a grave, and they all stood and read the superscription. After awhile, the elders sitting down, the youth and the little ones set to work busily, and shewed far from a slight acquaintance with the use of certain tiny spades and trowels they had brought; and the little fellow often busied himself specially in digging out the moss plants from the nearly obliterated letters. The girls shewed more anxiety about the grassy knoll—their taste led that way; perhaps there were daisies looking at *them*. The mother smiled upon her children at their work; the father while gazing had fallen back many years, and little "fairy" peeped into nooks and corners, as I have often seen a humming-bird pry into the calyx of a bell-flower.

As the work got on, the workmen slackened in their

labours; and they gradually extended their scope of letter-cutting. The little boy in time approached my locality, chisel and mallet in hand, and frankly, but with a blush, said in English—

“Please, Sir! have you any friends here in this yard, because I might clear them of the moss-plants?”

“Thank you, my dear little friend; I fear you are but tired already.”

“I never tire of chiselling that stone. Uncle William lies beneath it, and he fell in battle.”

The little boy had a strange mixture of pathos and energy in his countenance, which was beautifully formed; a nose coming straight from his brow, and a short curled upper-lip, gave him the air of a Greek statue, suddenly animated.

“And will you be a soldier, my boy, like Uncle William?”

“Yes!” said the little fellow. “It would never do for me to be anything else; for my name is ARTHUR; and perhaps, like Uncle William, I may one day have the colours of the regiment waved over me when struck down. Besides, my brother there carried the colours of the Highlanders on the day that he was sixteen, and he is not seventeen yet. And—and—and——”

“And what, my little fellow?”

“And Uncle Wilmington is a kind of soldier too, for he wears a cocked-hat and a sword; but mamma says he never kills any body.”

“And what does papa say?”

“He says he has his doubts upon that point, and that perhaps Uncle Wilmington has killed more men than anybody in the corps.”

I took the little boy's hand, and slowly approached the group; I could not help it. Some little hope, gauzy

withal, and ill-defined, led to the movement; and lifting my hat, whilst I did so my eye caught the newly-lettered tomb: it told of an officer of the —— who had fallen on the 15th of June, 1815, and this was the tomb I was in search of.

As I turned, the lady looked very pale, and had sunk, as it were, at her husband's feet, but not suddenly or fainting. He bowed, but with some precision; the lady recovered herself in a wonderful manner, and making quite a dash at me, threw her arms about my neck. She had not fallen off in weight in more than twenty years; I even think she was a little heavier.

"Mamma! you never told us that Uncle Wilmington was so like Mr. Potts," whispered my little nephew to his mother as we were bending our steps towards the Porte Louise; then, half afraid of the comparison not meeting with very distinct approval, he looked up in my face and said—

"But Uncle Wilmington, tell me, did you ever shoot a tiger?"

Then a juvenile Babel of small tongues, clipping up French into such very small morsels that I could make no manner of use of them, and mingled with glee, followed; and little Lucy volunteered to get upon the back of her brother who carried the colours of the Highlanders, for she was fatigued, and the handsome youth stooped down as if he had been quite accustomed to that work and liked it, and indeed preferred it to any other. And thus we trudged along, bent upon holding a family party, which we all managed to get up in the very best domestic style, and without a single flaw that any one could, by any overstraining, detect, up to bed-time.

CHAPTER XXIX.

ODD SCRAPS.

THERE were sufficient reasons for not making a family party to Waterloo; nevertheless I needs must visit it. Not all the cockney visitors of all the seasons, since steamers and railways have drawn that noted ground within thirty-six or forty hours of London, can vulgarize the pilgrimage. From the Grande Place, where her Grace of Richmond's ball was held, to the village of Mont St. Jean, where the lion-topped mound suddenly presents itself, every foot of ground is sacred to an Englishman.

Of all the guides to that field, by far the best is a youth who has just got a pair of colours to carry, and who has visited it several times before. As we skirted the forest of Soignies, a party in a carriage passed on the same errand; a military-looking man, in blue frogged coat, white moustache, and medal on his breast, rode beside them. He was legitimate successor to a certain noted "Sergeant Cotton," who, in capacity of guide to the field, resided at the village for many years.

When the latter died, a short time previously, this man, a connection, put his relative's boots on. He was a beardless trooper on the 18th of June, 1815, and had an excellent right to the succession; yet the Belgian guides do not hesitate to say that he was not at the battle; a foul slander—they said the same of Sergeant Cotton. As I examined cursorily the open side of the country, my youthful companion drew my attention to the forest side. He was particularly anxious to have my opinion as to what stand the Duke might probably have made, had he fallen back hard-pressed into the wood as he had intended. I was harder pressed than ever the Duke was, and had not the most distant idea in the world.

After the long and straggling village of Waterloo, the detached hamlet of Mont St. Jean forms the key to the field, which undulates beneath it. Belgian guides in blue blouses, and manufacturers of relics, hang about the inn-doors, who are not ashamed to say that their countrymen fled, if, by a sally thereanent, they can secure a patron for the day.

I had a better guide than any of these could be. He led me to the mound where two cottages are; we booked our names, and paid our fee, and received our change in a bad franc, which blushed along its edges—more sensitive than the donor, who received it again with an air that plainly said, “When am I to get rid of that piece?”

From the summit of the mound, the eye covers the whole field; it is far more limited than might be supposed; a couple of miles embrace it, from the extreme French to that of Wellington. It was wonderful to hear the precision with which my guide pointed out the localities. He knew to a foot where each brigade was planted, and what corps held Hougou-

mont and La Haye Sainte; and the noted ridge behind which the Guards bided their time, ere they exterminated the last hope of Napoleon, was as familiar to him as the boulevard in Brussels. He knew that there the "Ninety-second" gathered in Death's harvest, and the very spot where the "Greys" made their daring charge, when—

"A cloud of martial thunder
Had darkened all the host,
When its depths had rolled asunder,
What a mighty realm was lost !
'Up, Guards, and at them !' then
Was the watchword to the men—
For the spirit 'mid the haze,
That had caused the foe to quail,
Was the onset of the Gael,
With the charge of the Greys !

"Oh ! who can tell the slaughter
And the havoc that ensued,
For blood was poured like water
Where the daring victors stood !
Away, oh ! fled away
Was the chieftain of the fray,
For Napoleon's fairest bays
And his laurels all were torn,
And his beams of glory shorn
By the charge of the Greys !"

The youth's eyes glistened at these lines from a Scottish poet. From the mound we went to the shot-riddled Château of Hougoumont, where we again booked and again received a copper franc; but we were on our guard, and having no respect for Belgian feelings, detected it instantly;—the repetition of this incident denoted some demand for copper francs in that part of the Belgian dominions. As we passed,

on our return through the village of Waterloo, a sign-board on an hostelry, with letters two feet high, informed us that there resided

“SERGEANT MUNDY WHO SERVED AT THE BATTLE.”

May he live ‘until his shin - bones cut tobacco!’

THE END.

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